BRITISH TRAVEL JOURNAL

STORIES TO INSPIRE THE BRITISH ISLES

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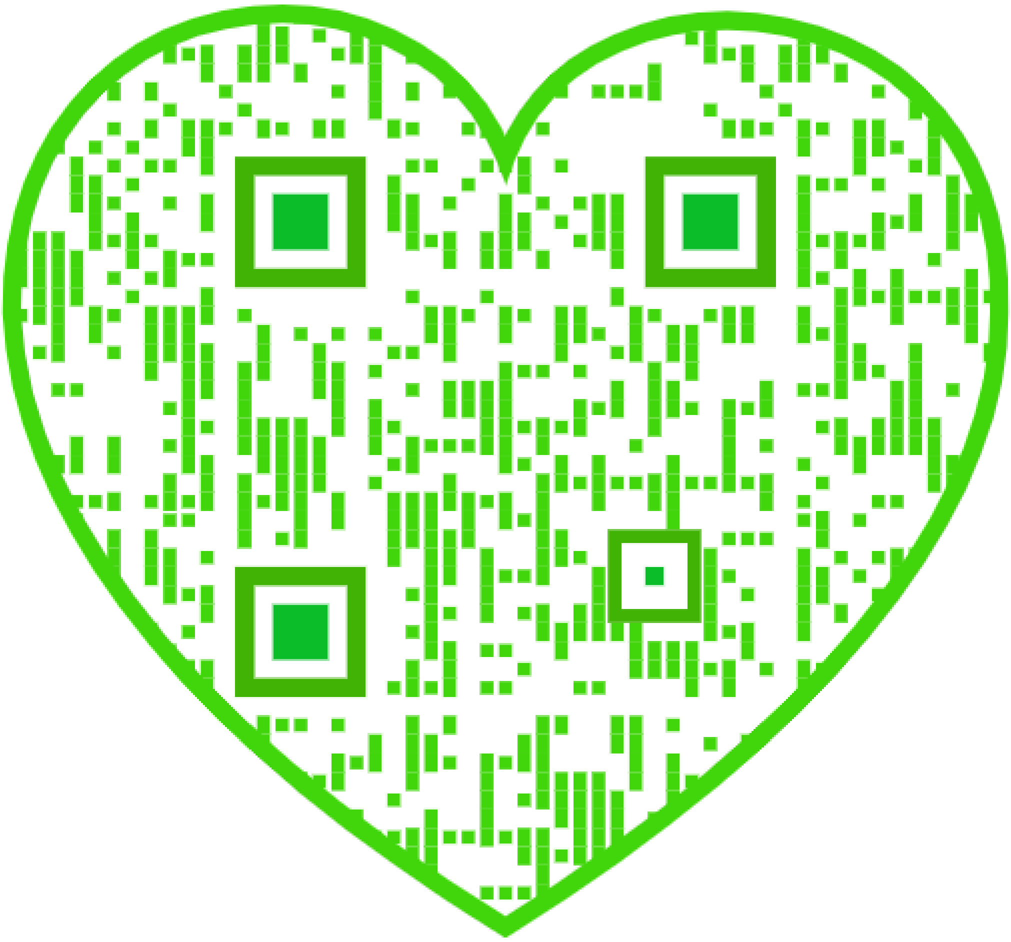
NEW HOTELS | ARTISAN FOOD | LIFE EXPERIENCES | LUXURY STAYS



Overlooking the ocean on the west coast of the tiny island of Bryher, Hell Bay is the Isles of Scilly's highest-rated hotel and only 3AA Rosette restaurant.

A haven of calm in a wild seascape.

HELLBAY.CO.UK

Hell Bay

Bryher
Isles of Scilly

WELCOME

Spring has finally sprung and as the seasons start to shift, it's time to embrace a new wave of travel. With special interest holidays – dubbed SPIN breaks – on the rise, we shed insight into meaningful and enriching experience-led escapes (p62) and floating staycations on inland waterways (p94).

Our features take us adventuring across Scotland, with a culinary tour of Edinburgh (p40) and a deep dive into Isle of Skye's artisan producers (p82). We celebrate the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen – one of the most famous and quintessentially English novelists – visiting the landmarks that inspired the author's works (p70).

If you're looking for meaningful travel ideas in spectacular locations, we encourage you to join *British Travel Journal* this year as we don our hiking boots in collaboration with Macmillan for the Lake District Mighty Hike, part of the charity's iconic marathon walk series across the UK.

Wherever you journey, we hope this edition sparks a little curiosity and encourages you to try something new. Safe travels, and remember to pack for all seasons, see our new Travel Hot List (p50) for some on trend inspiration! ◆

Jessica

Jessica Way, Editor-in-Chief

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Cover Image: Karolina Wiercigroch visits Falmouth, Cornwall (p24)
Contributions: Amy Bonifas, Sophie Farrah, Emma Henderson, Jane Knight, Paul Miles, Natalie Millar-Partridge, Kirstie Pickering, Karolina Wiercigroch
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Filled with THE PIG's signature style, the brand new PIG-in the Cotswolds is homely and informal, boasting flourishing listed gardens, a nature-inspired wellness spa and its very own village pub.

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Head to one of the Isles of Scilly's biannual Low Tide Festivals for the unique opportunity to walk between the islands of Tresco and Bryher, celebrating the archipelago's biannual spring tides in true Scillonian spirit.

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A destination for foodies, Scotland's captivating capital is home to some of the UK's most exciting and diverse food scenes; we embark on a culinary exploration, uncovering the city's standout spots to eat and drink.

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Your dream spa day awaits! Indulge in a chance to win a £200 Pampers Paradise gift voucher and choose your luxury experience at a gorgeous PoB Hotel.

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Journey to the Hampshire countryside for a weekend of wild wellness; fusing comfort and style, Avington Estate provides a luxurious space to take time out and soak up all the goodness of the great outdoors.

62 LIFE EXPERIENCES

British Travel Journal discovers some of the year's most exciting and diverse experience-led getaways – whether you're looking for historical intrigue, to solve a mystery or learn a new skill, there's discoveries abound for every type of adventurer.

70 FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JANE AUSTEN

We celebrate the 250th anniversary of the author's birth with an exploration of Jane Austen's various homes – from the honey-hued stone of Bath, to the quaint village of Chawton and her final resting place in Winchester.

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To celebrate this milestone of a literary icon, the Great West Way follow in Jane's footsteps on a whimsical journey visiting some of the special landmarks that inspired the author's work.

82 THE SKYE'S THE LIMIT

Embark on an adventure to the beautifully wild and remote Isle of Skye, and discover the inspiring artisan producers at the forefront of championing and preserving the island's bountiful natural larder.

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British Travel Journal takes a trip to North Cornwall's Area of Outstanding Beauty with the Point at Polzeath to explore the surrounding stretches of golden sand and innovative foodie haunts, staying at an exquisite holiday home in Rock.

94 BOATING THROUGH BRITAIN

Floating staycations are on the rise, enticing a more discerning crowd with a new wave of vessels offering luxury home-from-home experiences on inland waterways – think four-posters, all mod-cons and hot tubs on the bows!

98 CLUES AND REVIEWS

Wherever you're set to travel this spring, our latest book recommendations, puzzles and crosswords will keep you engaged and entertained.

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World Heritage Site

Royal Museums Greenwich
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⛴ Greenwich Pier ⊖ Cutty Sark ⇌ Greenwich (only 8 mins from London Bridge)

TRAVEL NEWS
Spring

Spring is in the air and we have a whole new crop of places to stay, from a hotel in the South Downs perfect for hiking to a converted church in the Isle of Arran

Text by Jane Knight

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHT

HOTELS

from page 8

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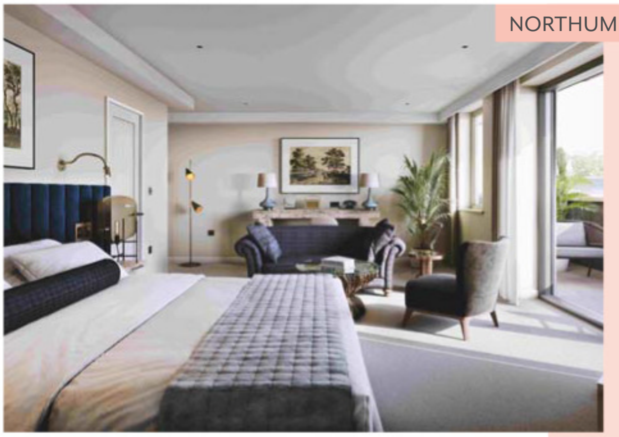
Pictured anticlockwise from top: Belmond's Britannic Explorer, England and Wales; Pine Trees, Perthshire; Albatros boat trip, The Lake District; Designers Guild Shepherd's Hut, Cornwall; Solace, Devon

THE SOUTH DOWNS

The Alfriston

If you love the contemporary cool design and reasonable rates of The Signet Collection, take a look at its fourth property. In a pretty village of the same name surrounded by great walking country and near Rathfinny wine estate, The Alfriston opens later this month with 38 rooms, a brasserie featuring local produce, and a boutique spa with outdoor pool. ◆

→ Rooms from £150, with breakfast; signet.ltd



NORTHUMBERLAND

The Bailiffgate Hotel

With views over Alnwick Castle or the Northumberland countryside, this hotel in a Georgian house adjoining a five-storey modern building is set to open in June. Modern British cuisine will feature in the restaurant, while the 48 rooms will be contemporary in style. The hotel makes a great base for Harry Potter fans (some of the movies were filmed in the castle). ◆

→ Rooms from £172, with breakfast; bailiffgatehotel.com

PERTHSHIRE

Pine Trees

Sip a whisky flight while trying a chocolate tasting with the Highland Chocolatier as part of the Taste of Scotland package at this hotel in Pitlochry, fresh from a refurbishment. Public rooms are grand, with an enormous wooden fireplace and extravagant wallpaper, while the 32 rooms are cosier, with tongue and grove panelling and throws on the beds. ◆

→ Rooms from £238, with breakfast; Taste of Scotland from £329, including dining credit; pinetreeshotel.co.uk

NEWCASTLE

Hotel Gotham

It's been ten years since Gotham Hotels opened in Manchester. This autumn, it's set to open its doors in Newcastle's former fire station, with 57 rooms. You can expect theatrical décor, a bar with a DJ booth and slick service – but no slippery poles. More rooms are due to follow in the police station side of the hotel.

→ Room rates yet to be set; hotelgotham.co.uk

ONE TO *watch*

MANCHESTER

Treehouse Hotel

For a fun place to stay, look no further than Treehouse, which (ahem) branches out from London and moves into Manchester this month. Full of whimsy and leafy plants hanging from ceilings, the 224-room hotel has a 43-seat screening room and a 'playground' gym, which includes monkey bars. Up on the 14th floor, The Nest in Treehouse is the place to go for a drink with panoramic city views; an Asian restaurant is due to open here later in 2025. ◆

→ Rooms from £199, without breakfast; treehousehotels.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rabbit

There's been a fair bit of burrowing going on at The Rabbit, adding 17 rooms in a new extension to an existing 33. The hotel in the village of Templepatrick, 20 minutes from Belfast, has created quite a name for itself on the spa circuit, with its disco ball hanging over a Roman Bath, heated pebbled beach and series of hot tubs, saunas and salt room. ◆

→ Rooms from £180, with breakfast; rabbithotel.com

LONDON

London Marriott County Hall

For the ultimate room with a view in the capital, check out the Big Ben suite in the former Greater London Council building on the South Bank, which also showcases the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye. It's one of 35 additional rooms in the hotel, including loft rooms with a staircase to a private river-view platform. ◆

→ Suite from £900 for two, loft rooms from £300, with breakfast; marriott.com

IMAGE © DANIEL HERENDI NEVER ORDINARY VIEW

ENGLAND AND WALES

Belmond's Britannic Explorer

Why settle for a stationary hotel when you can take to the rails and enjoy moving scenery outside your bedroom window. Belmond's Britannic Explorer starts its three-night trips to Cornwall, The Lake District or Wales in July. With menus by Simon Rogan, 18 swish cabins and tailored excursions, it promises to be a spoiling – if expensive – experience. ◆

→ Three-night journeys for two from £11,000, all inclusive; belmond.com

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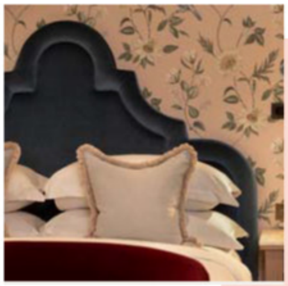

SCOTLAND

Mar Hall

Kylie, Beyoncé and Harry Styles have all stayed at this heritage hotel just ten minutes from Glasgow Airport. Now, its traditional, elegant style is being replaced with a sophisticated country look as part of a £15 million refurbishment that's due to be completed by May. A cinema and members' lounge are also being added.

→ Rooms from £245, with breakfast; marhall.com

VAZON BAY, GUERNSEY
Find *your* Island feeling
The ISLANDS *of*
GUERNSEY

THE LAKE DISTRICT

Albatros Boat Trip

See Windermere in style aboard the Albatros, a restored 1928 Gentleman's Launch that has just started running boat trips from Langdale Chase Hotel on the lake shore. Three 90-minute sailings are scheduled each day, with an additional pre-dinner cruise in summer that will include champagne and canapés. Trips are open to both hotel guests and day visitors. ◆

→ Cruise from £40 per person; langdalechase.com

EAST SUSSEX

Newhaven Fort Reopens

Enjoy the interactive exhibitions, let the kids clamber over the new adventure playground, and try to find your way out of a 1970s themed escape room at this 19th-century fort, which has just re-opened after a £7.5 million restoration. Visitors can explore previously hidden parts of the fort including the Battery Observation Post, which has great views. ◆

→ Tickets £12.95 for adults, £9.95 for children; newhavenfort.org.uk

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CHESTER

Safari adventure at the zoo

Help the rangers prepare food for the giraffes, go behind the scenes to see where spitting cobras live, and take a night-time safari to help feed the animals. It's all part of the Savannah Adventurer Package at the safari-style lodges opening at Chester Zoo in August. A night's stay with dinner and breakfast plus two days' entry to the zoo is included. ◆

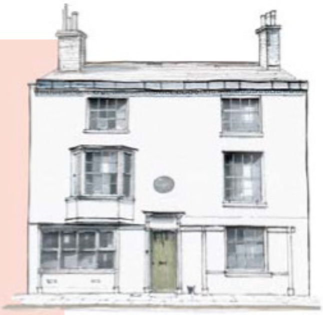
→ Savannah Adventurer Package from £875 for two; chesterzoo.org

WINCHESTER

Jane Austen's last residence

As part of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth this year (see page 70), 8 College Street, where she spent her final weeks, will be open to the public for the first time this summer. Demand is expected to be high, with visits on Wednesdays and Saturdays only from June 4-August 30, so book as early as possible.

→ Tickets £12.50; winchestercollege.org



EDINBURGH

Royal Yacht Britannia

Shipshape for spring, the Royal Yacht in Edinburgh is opening a new visitor centre incorporating formerly unshown images and films, with an exhibition telling her story from the time she was built in John Brown's shipyard. Explore Britannia's five decks, from the engine room to the State Apartments, and admire her trio of former yachts – Bloodhound, Bluebottle and Coweslip – which have also been restored. ◆

→ Adult tickets £20, children £9.50; royalyachtbritannia.co.uk

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LONDON

Museum of Shakespeare

Head underground and four centuries back in time to stand over the remains of the stage at the Shakespearean Curtain Playhouse in Shoreditch. Revealed during an archaeological dig from 2011-2016 and set to open later this year as an immersive experience, the theatre will have a projected reconstruction of what it was like when Henry V performed there. ◆

→ Sign up for early details at museumofshakespeare.org.uk

ONE TO
watch

CORNWALL

Designers Guild Shepherd's Hut

If you love the fabric and paints from luxury lifestyle brand Designers Guild, check out its takeover of one of the shepherds' huts at Rick Stein's The Cornish Arms in Padstow. Marking the 50th anniversary of The Rick Stein Group, the makeover comes in shades of jade, willow and emerald, with Designers Guild cushions and rugs on the patio, ideal for stargazing. ◆

→ From £170 for two; rickstein.com

LANCASHIRE

Hidden Hills Glamping

Jungle-themed wallpaper graces one of these new cabins and angels adorn the bedroom wall of another, along with a large glass panel over the beds for night-sky views. Just a 20-minute drive from Lancaster and overlooking the Lune Valley, each cabin has a sauna and hot tub from which you can watch movies projected onto a screen. ◆

→ From £250 for two; hiddenhillsglamping.co.uk

NORFOLK

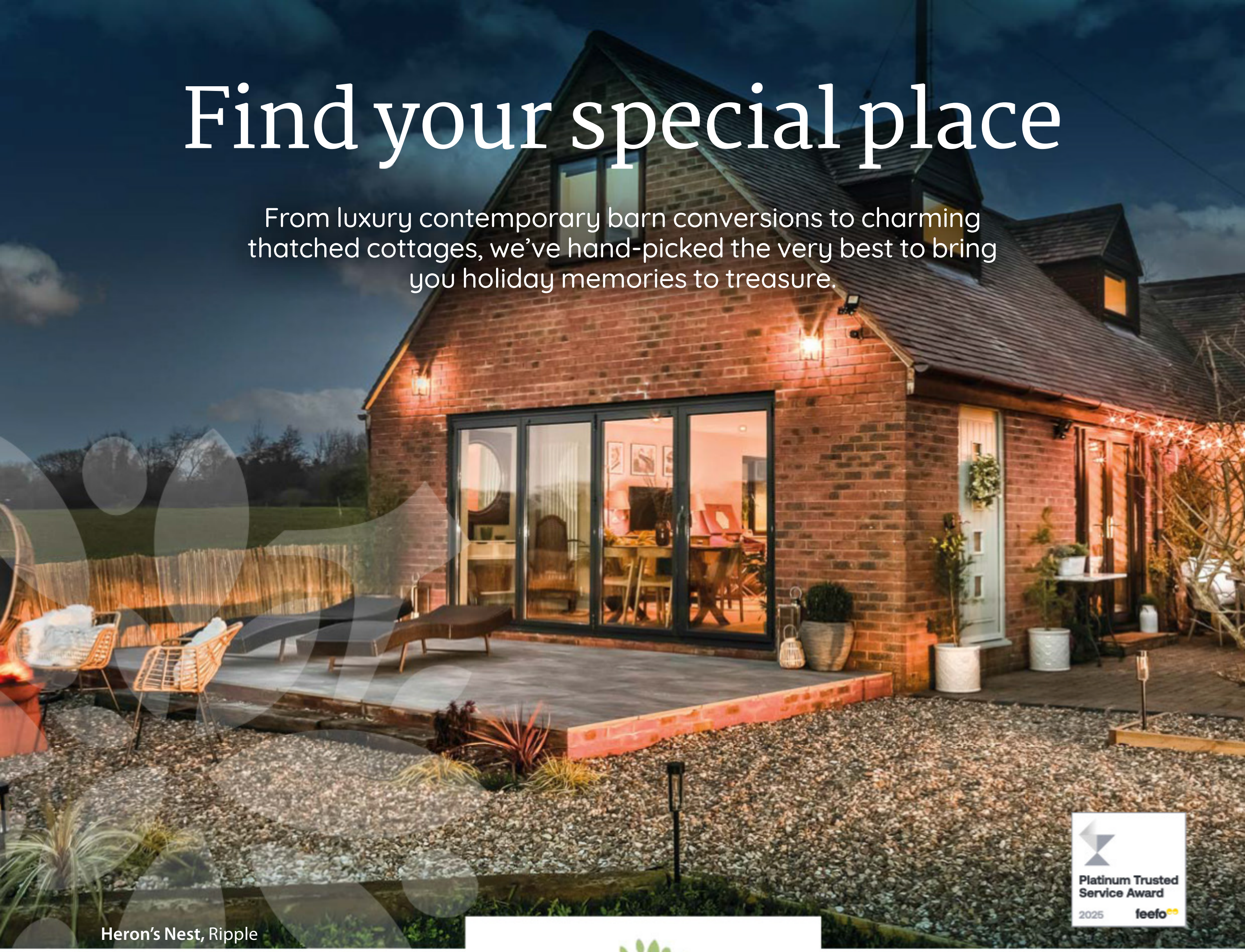
Holkham Shepherds' Huts

Just a short stroll from the swathes of sand at North Norfolk's Holkham Beach, these four new dog-friendly shepherds' huts on the Holkham Hall Estate open their doors in April. Each comes with its own kitchen, but you might just want to pop into The Victoria Hotel for a meal. Go boating on the lake, tour the hall and ramble over miles of coastal paths. ◆

→ Two-night weekends from £540 for two; holkham.co.uk

Find your special place

From luxury contemporary barn conversions to charming thatched cottages, we've hand-picked the very best to bring you holiday memories to treasure.



Heron's Nest, Ripple

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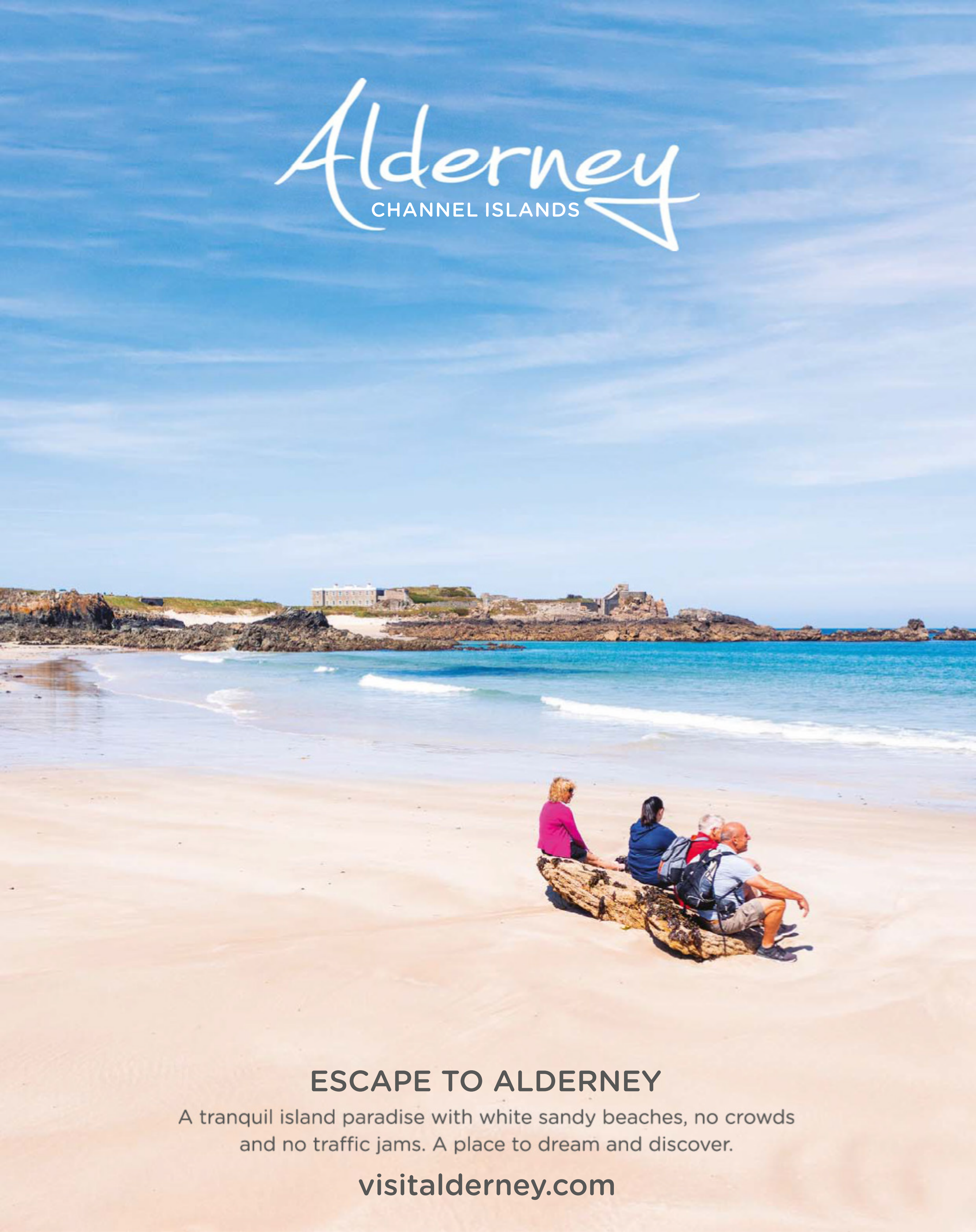

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visitalderney.com

SURREY

Firesyde lodges

Really immerse yourself in the countryside at these five recently opened wooden lodges with outside baths bordering Winkworth Arboretum. Order a locally sourced hamper of food to cook on the outdoor firepit, or in summer, eat foraged food at the fine-dining pop up beneath the oak trees. A wild spa is due to open in April.

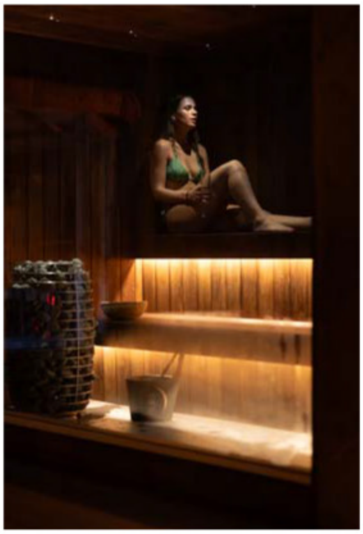
→ From £300 for two; firesyde.co.uk

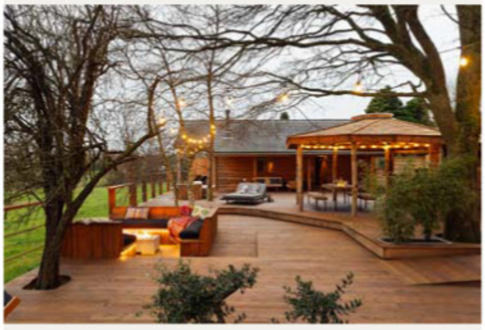
SOMERSET

Camelot

You can see how they came up with the name – this latest addition to The Orchard at Fenny Castle's high-end treehouses is more of a kingdom than a cabin. The appealingly rustic wooden house comes with a sunken whirlpool bath, its own sauna and gym, a massage room, cinema den, pizza oven and extras such as Netflix and Bramley toiletries. There are bikes to explore the Somerset Levels if you can tear yourself away. ◆

→ From £499 for six; theorchardatfenny.co.uk





NORTHUMBERLAND

Tiptoe Retreat

Stylish yet sustainable, these two new cabins in North Northumberland are powered by solar panels and air source heat pumps, with water provided by a private borehole. Each has a super-king bed, underfloor heating and outdoor copper bath. Howlet has a living roof, while Brock has a stargazing skylight above the bed and an outdoor rope hammock. ◆

→ From £185 for two; tiptoeretreat.co.uk

SOMERSET

The Stables

When you stay in this three-bedroom country cottage in the grounds of Elizabethan Combe Head House, you can book a home-cooked meal in the Tudor Hall with its grand inglenook fireplace. Relax with in-room spa treatments and visit the pygmy goats, sheep, hens and pigs. The Old Lodge, with beamed rooms for up to ten guests, is set to open later this year. ◆

→ Two nights for six from £550; combeheadhouse.com

IMAGE © MATT AUSTIN

THE PEAK DISTRICT

Sobriety Escapes

Foxlow Grange in Buxton doesn't just offer eight appealing self-catering apartments – it also has a selection of experiences, including new sobriety escapes. Take part in an alcohol-free mixology workshop, kickstart the day with guided meditation or yoga, explore the Peak District on a guided mindfulness walk, and take part in a wellness workshop. ◆

→ Two nights from £449pp based on four staying together; museescapes.com

IMAGE © MILES WILLIS

WILTSHIRE

Andover House

House parties don't come much posher than in the childhood home of the Earl of Suffolk, nestled within his 4,500-acre Charlton Park Estate. There's a grass strip to land your plane and a helipad, as well as ten bedrooms in the elegant home. By day, go clay-pigeon shooting or tour the estate by electric scooter, then return to play billiards or for a soak in the hot tub. ◆

→ Two nights for 20 from £2,500; charltonpark.estate

GUERNSEY

The Renoir Cottage

Portrayed in Renoir's Fog on Guernsey painting, this cute cottage, which was visited by the artist and by Victor Hugo when it was a tearoom, can now be rented as a boutique bolthole for two. With views over the bay of Moulin Huet, it has a bed on a mezzanine reached by a ladder, a wood-burning stove and underfloor heating.

→ A night for two from £169; renoircottage.com

CORNWALL

First Light

Surely there's no better place to watch the sunrise than from the balcony of this Scandi-inspired house on the coastal path overlooking St Ives Bay and Godrevy Lighthouse? There's outdoor dining to make the most of the panoramic view, as well as a cinema room indoors and five modern rooms – three with en suites and the other two sharing a bathroom. It's just a short walk to St Ives' art galleries or to the beach. ◆

→ A week for ten from £4,995; cornishgems.com

LONDON

Chinnery House Apartments

You'll get a hotel's spoiling treats (White House robes, slippers and breakfast hampers) but more privacy and flexibility at these boltholes in Pimlico, owned by the Georgian House Hotel. Expect earthy tones with wooden floors, high ceilings, a kitchenette and contemporary styling in the three existing apartments, with two new ones opening this Spring. ◆

→ Two nights for two from £440; georgianhousehotel.co.uk

IMAGE © JAKE EASTHAM

DEVON

Solace

The expanse of glass fronting this contemporary clifftop house in North Devon's Combe Martin is almost as impressive as the sublime seaside views on show through it. You can gaze out to sea from the incredibly spacious open-plan living quarters and some of the six bedrooms, as well as from the terrace and infinity pool. ◆

→ A long weekend for ten from £4,596; boutique-retreats.co.uk

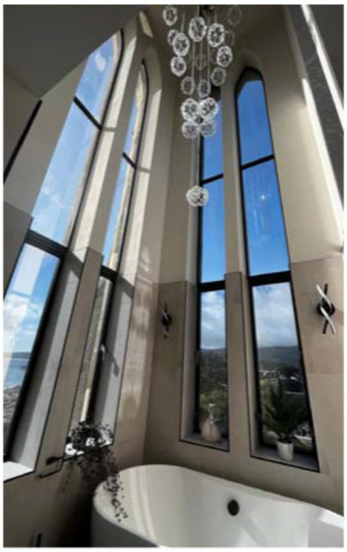
IMAGE © M J HERITAGE

ISLE OF ARRAN

Arran Shores

It doesn't get much more heavenly than gazing across the water at Holy Isle from the balcony of your apartment in this converted 19th-century St George's church. You can even take in watery views from your bed through lancet windows in one of the 12 apartments on the Isle of Arran. All are decorated in a muted palette and are the height of contemporary chic. ◆

→ A week for four in the balcony suites from £1,840; arranshores.com



NORTH WALES

Bron Y Gadair

Where better to say when visiting the Italianate-style village of Portmeirion in North Wales than at a renovated farmhouse a 15-minute drive away that's owned by descendants of Portmeirion's architect, Clough Williams-Ellis? The style is more rustic at the four-room cottage, with beams, fireplaces and views stretching to Snowdonia.

→ A long weekend for eight from £635; oysterholidaycottages.co.uk

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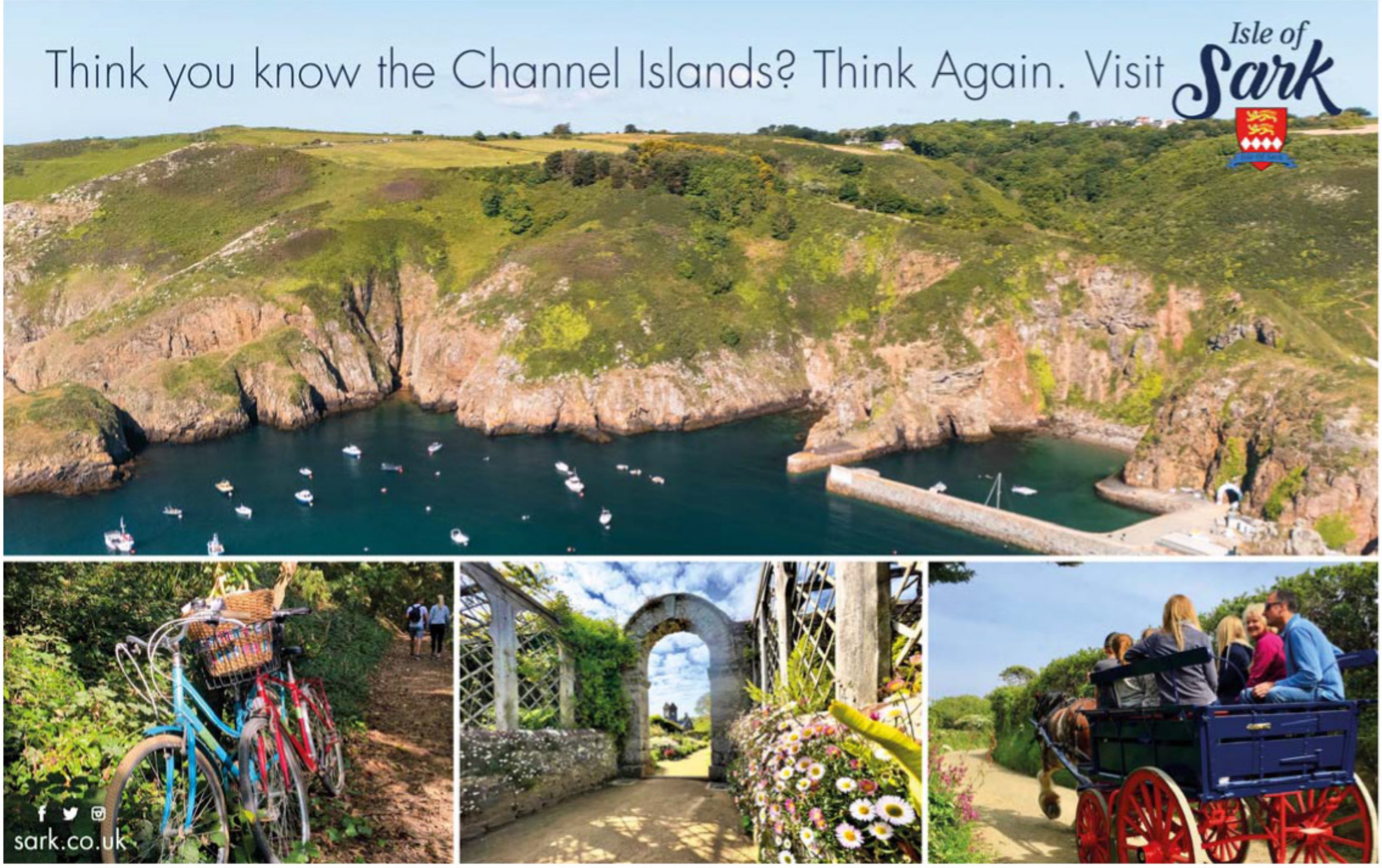
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Afternoon Tea

Delight someone special with a 'Time for Tea' experience voucher. This enchanting gift invites the recipient to enjoy a lovely afternoon tea at any PoB Hotel, each adding its own unique flair to this cherished British tradition. Picture elegantly arranged finger sandwiches, delectable pastries and warm, fluffy scones. Available in denominations of £50 and £75, it is a treat that is truly everyone's cup of tea.

PAMPERS PARADISE
SEASONED TO PERFECTION
TIME FOR TEA

Culinary Journeys

For the discerning food lover, a 'Seasoned to Perfection' experience voucher promises a gastronomic adventure like no other. This versatile voucher can be redeemed at any PoB Hotel for a dining experience, from a relaxed lunch to a memorable dinner. Guests will delight in carefully crafted menus, showcasing local delicacies and chefs' signature dishes. Available in values of £100, £150 or £200, it is the ultimate gift for those who relish the finer things in life – because nothing compares to sharing exquisite food in great company.

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Treat someone to the ultimate in self-care with a 'Pampers Paradise' Spa experience voucher. This sumptuous gift allows the recipient to craft their perfect wellness day at any of PoB Hotels' stunning spa hotels. Whether they seek revitalising treatments, serene spa days or invigorating wellness classes, they will be wrapped in comfort and luxury. The voucher is available in increments of £100, £150 or £200, ensuring a rejuvenating experience that reflects the finest British hospitality.

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pobhotels.com/gift-vouchers

WHERE COAST *meets flora*

Surrounded by pristine beaches and the lush subtropical flora of South Cornwall, St Michaels Resort in Falmouth serves locally-sourced food and heaps of coastal tranquility.

Text and images by Karolina Wiercigroch

Known for its deep natural harbour on the Fal Estuary, Falmouth boasts a rich maritime history. Its long-standing relationship with the sea dates back to the 17th-century packet ships, which carried mail to and from the far-flung reaches of the British Empire.

With its shipping docks and fishing industry, Falmouth remains a busy working port, as well as a popular sailing destination. On a sunny afternoon, the waterfront is buzzing with activity, with sailors throwing mooring lines and tourists boarding the ferry to the pretty village of St Mawes on the Roseland Peninsula. Harbourside restaurants are filled with the laughter of groups of friends soaking up the sea views, gorging on the grilled catch of the day and fresh Fal oysters. A stream of visitors leisurely stroll along the colourful streets of Falmouth, eying second-hand stores, art galleries and the spiced cauliflower pasties at The Cornish Bakery. We turn right, leaving the crowds behind.

Pleasantly tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the town centre lies St Michaels Resort, known for its wellness retreats and a luxury spa garden. We check into a spacious Beach House room, a soothing space filled with seaside tones and bright wood, and head straight to dinner.

SEASALT
SEASALT
SEASALT
AUTOMATIC BOLLARD
STOP

'On a sunny afternoon, the waterfront is buzzing with activity, with sailors throwing mooring lines and tourists boarding the ferry to the pretty village of St Mawes on the Roseland Peninsula'

St Michaels main restaurant, Brasserie on the Bay, is stylish and airy, with a wall of panoramic windows overlooking the quiet waters of Falmouth Bay. The AA rosette-winning restaurant serves up the best of Cornwall's farms, fields and waters. Working closely with local farmers, fishermen and artisans, the restaurant celebrates produce that is low in food miles: crusty sourdough from Da Bara Bakery, charcuterie from Deli Farm in Debole, and velvety Treleavens ice cream churned near Bodmin from Cornish milk supplied by Trewithen Dairy. St Michaels uses the best seasonal plants, animals, fish and shellfish from Cornwall and the West Country, fortifying each menu with local ingredients. The passionate kitchen brigade strives to plate up a slice of Cornwall, topped with something zingy. Expect fresh, honest menus and a service team eager to share food stories.

I start my meal with a summery glass of Cornish Camel Valley Brut, favoured across Cornwall and served by both Rick Stein and Nathan Outlaw. The crab for my starter was supplied by Mark and Emma Rowse's The Real Cornish Crab Company: the magnificently fresh, delicate white crab meat is served with a zingy, silky gazpacho of cucumber, avocado and jalapeno. The catch of the day is excellent (it's a pan-fried stone bass, paired with Cornish new potatoes and a piquant salad of gherkins, capers and pickled shallots), but I'm a little envious of my husband's meaty local mussels, gently cooked in Cornish Orchard cider. Somehow, we still have room for the luscious Treleavens ice cream.

The festival of locality continues at breakfast: sausages and bacon from a local family-run business, and fruity jams and marmalades made by Boddington's Berries in the famous fishing village of Mevagissy.

Sipping coffee, I look out to the lush, subtropical garden, planted with rhododendrons, palm trees, pampas grass and bamboo, the verdant foliage creating secluded nooks for the spa guests to relax in.

Thanks to the Gulf Stream, the south of Cornwall is blessed with leafy vegetation and some fantastic gardens. Near Falmouth, the valley gardens of Trebah and Glendurgan run side by side down to the Helford Passage, crowded with tropical plants, ancient trees and seasonal

> The sandy Gyllyngvase Beach is busy with swimmers carrying fluorescent tow floats and hopping into the wood-fired Kiln sauna after a cold session. The hilly, green path takes us to Swanpool Beach, picture-perfect with turquoise water and a neat line of pastel beach huts.

blooms. We set off to admire the verdure on a walk down the South West Coast Path, conveniently located on our doorstep. The sandy Gyllyngvase beach is busy with swimmers carrying fluorescent tow floats and hopping into the wood-fired Kiln sauna after a cold session. The hilly, green path takes us to Swanpool beach, picture-perfect with turquoise water and a neat line of pastel beach huts.

We explore the bushy trail, descending into rocky coves, spotting SUPs and kayaks, and eventually reach the golden sandy cove of the sheltered Maenporth beach. Fuelled on coffee and bacon baps from the beach cafe, we slowly make our way back, just in time to explore the spa.

With the largest hydrothermal pool in the South West, the world's only Cornish sea salt steam room and the luxury spa garden, St Michaels hydrothermal experience lives up to the hype. Moving between stages of heat and cold – from a sultry steam room to a frigid plunge pool – I can feel my stress and tension go away.

One of the steam rooms infuses local sea salt from the Lizard Peninsula into the air, the loungers are gloriously heated, and chilled Cornish drinking water is served around the spa. In the warm hydrotherapy pool, I let water jets massage my calves, slightly tight after the walk. Out in the garden, I take a book to the hot tub and admire blooms and foliage through the round, panoramic window of the barrel sauna. After a steamy session, followed by an

ORMER
SEA URCHIN

FALMOUTH
BESIDE THE WAVE
BESIDE THE WAVE
THE CORNISH STORE

icy cold plunge, I retreat to a secluded lounger, looking out onto Falmouth Bay.

Deeply relaxed but also fairly hungry, we enter St Michaels second restaurant, Nourish. Filled with light and plants, it has a friendly atmosphere of a local cafe. The menu, which changes with the seasons, is focused around local ingredients, with Cornish-style tapas, flatbreads from a wood-fired oven and plenty of plant-based options. The flaky, crispy-fried stone bass is served with a zesty salad of fennel and dill, and a house-made anchoiade: a rustic Provencal dip whipped from olive oil, anchovies and vinegar. My flatbread arrives hot, fresh from the scorching oven. It's topped with Moroccan-spiced tofu, crispy chickpeas and a delectable dressing of avocado and tahini. Once the sun sets, the vibe at Nourish shifts slightly: it is now a relaxed summer bar, serving the best of local drinks: Knightor wines made from Cornish grapes, Tarquin's Gin distilled on the north coast.

We, however, are ready for bed. Plans for tomorrow are ambitious: a morning gym session at St Michaels Health Club, a short run on the coastal path, then joining local swimmers on Gylly Beach – all before a breakfast of local eggs and Cornish butter.

→ *Doubles at St Michaels Resort start from £150 including breakfast; stmichaelsresort.com*

THE NEW PIG *on the block*

With stunning listed gardens, an extended spa offering and its very own Village Pub, British Travel Journal checks into the brand-new PIG-in the Cotswolds

Text by Sophie Farrah

Over the past 13 years, Robin and Judy Hutson's hugely successful PIG hotels have multiplied. There's now a total of nine in the litter, dotted across every county in the south of England. With sprawling kitchen gardens, friendly service, delicious food and cosy, eclectic interiors that are unmistakably PIG, each one is unique, but collectively they all offer the same laid back yet deeply luxurious experience.

As a longstanding PIG fan, I was delighted to hear of a new opening, but as I packed my bags I felt a flicker of apprehension: would yet another addition manage to capture that same sense of playful Piggy personality and irresistible charm that so many of us have come to love? I hopped in the car and headed off to find out.

The Hutsons always manage to acquire exceptionally beautiful properties with a sense of history, and The PIG-in the Cotswolds, which opened at the end of 2024, is no exception. Formerly Barnsley House hotel, this honey-hued 17th century Grade II listed manor house was once the home of the world-famous garden designer Rosemary Verey, and from the moment I pulled up the driveway her influence was palpable.

Verey's exquisite Arts and Crafts-style gardens have been carefully kept exactly as she left them (free garden tours take place each morning for guests). The epitome of a quintessential English country garden, I strolled amongst the rambling roses, abundant borders, lush laburnum walkway and romantic archways covered in trailing plants. There's also a pretty potager garden, evocative follies, a pond teeming with water lilies, and cleverly planned vistas that catch the eye at every turn. A new addition is The PIG's trademark kitchen garden, closely overlooked by the resident chickens and bursting with fresh produce for the hotel's restaurant.

Framed perfectly by rows of mushroom-shaped topiary trees, I walked up the cobbled path towards the hotel. Wooden steamer chairs occupy the lawn in front of the picture-perfect Cotswolds manor house. I took a seat under a chic patterned parasol and ordered an array of 'Piggy bits'– lightly fried and perfectly crisp chard stalks, moreish cockle popcorn, and mouthfuls of petal-strewn smoked mackerel pâté – served amongst the garden's glorious flower beds and dancing butterflies.

The Rosemary effect is evident inside too. There is co-founder and creative director Judy Hutson's trademark mix of new and old, where rustic wooden furniture meets colourful patterned fabrics intermingled with unusual antiques and one-off pieces, but there is also a distinctly elegant, feminine quality to the interiors here. There are various areas designed for hunkering down in, including The Library – a pleasing putty-pink space filled with floral fabrics, trinkets and chintz, gardening books and a perfect little nook for two by the window. I think Rosemary would approve.

There are 20 characterful bedrooms in total, of various shapes and sizes. Some have views over the glorious gardens, and all offer the deeply luxurious comfort that The PIG is known for in the shape of sumptuous interiors, generous baths, brimming 'larders' and incredibly comfortable beds.

There are several very special rooms tucked away in the garden, including my home for the night – Rosemary's Hideaway. This show-stopper suite has its own private entrance, a spacious sitting room (with original cornicing and fireplace) and a stunning four-poster bed with a beautiful canopy of metal roses overhead. It also has a pretty terrace and a staggering greenhouse-esque private dining room that seats up to 14 – complete with a listed stone and shell grotto designed and made by Rosemary herself.

This latest PIG is the first to offer an extended spa area, which is where I headed to next. The Fieldhouse is an elegant, nature-inspired wellness haven with a sauna, steam room, cosy treatment rooms and a serene spa garden with an outdoor hydrotherapy pool surrounded by soaring trees. After a good full body massage, I reclined on a beautifully

THE VILLAGE PUB & ROOMS
ENTRANCE & CAR PARK

upholstered lounger, took in the countryside views, and felt my shoulders drop several inches.

This little piggy is also the first to have its very own pub. Just a few minutes' stroll away from the hotel, the now 'pigified' Village Pub is filled with cosy country charm and is irresistibly atmospheric. There are local beers and cider on tap and a serious wine list to boot, whilst the menu offers hearty, elevated pub classics. Outside there's a pretty beer garden, should the great British weather allow.

Back at the hotel, fires were being lit and cocktails shaked. I sunk into a red velvet sofa and eyed up the hefty slices of cake on offer. A smiling waiter suggested a glass of English sparkling, and who could resist? This beautiful bolthole may offer all the peace and tranquillity of its bucolic setting, but there is a playful energy about it too – a twinkle in its eye – that encourages you to indulge. This is mostly down to the wonderfully warm and efficient service seamlessly orchestrated by hotel director Sophie Perry and her team (who all quickly felt like friends).

'Pigging out' plays a huge part of any stay and the food was the best I've had at any PIG. Surrounded by sprawling pots of herbs, a roaring fire and walls of antique oil paintings, I tucked into the hotel's signature '25 Mile Menu' which features freshly picked fruit and veg from the kitchen garden and a few other ingredients all sourced from within a 25-mile radius. I feasted on a sweet and satisfying polytunnel tomato vol-au-vent, and a deeply comforting leek risotto with creamy blue cheese and tangy pickled onions. I spied beautifully presented antique plates topped with huge Barnsley lamb chops, whole roasted partridge and chunks of turbot all flying out of the kitchen. My dessert – a thick set cream gently laced with local honey and lavender from the garden – was unforgettably good. Equally impressive is the extensive wine list; hugely knowledgeable sommelier Connor and the hotel's brilliant beverage director, Ed, make a charismatic team.

After dinner, I made my way to the candlelit bar for a nightcap (a very good Cotswolds White Negroni) before returning to my hideaway in the garden, where Rosemary's now illuminated shell and stone grotto appeared even more magical by night. With a herbal tea waiting on my pillow – The PIG's sleep-inducing 'Hit the Hay' blend – I slipped into the sheets and marvelled at the fairytale-esque tangle of flowers overhead before drifting off.

Soon, the aromas of The PIG's legendary breakfast called. A veritable feast is served in the restaurant, but I couldn't resist having mine – smashed peas with garden chilli, lemon and poached eggs on sourdough toast – in my very own private dining room, with the French doors open and birdsong floating in.

I considered my day ahead. Just four miles from the market town of Cirencester and within striking distance of local gems such as Bibury, Burford and Bourton-on-the-Water, The PIG-in the Cotswolds could not be better positioned for exploring this staggeringly beautiful part of the country, if you can tear yourself away.

The sense of unease that I had originally felt when packing was long forgotten, only to be replaced by the disappointment of my impending check-out. That's the only problem with The PIG – having to leave. And it seems that this very special addition to the litter is no exception. ◆

→ *Rooms range from £250 per night (room only) for an Extremely Small to £775 per night for the showstopper suites tucked away in the gardens; thepighotel.com*

IMAGES © JAKE EASTHAM (THE PIG IN THE COTSWOLDS)

DANCING *on* *the seabed*

Just twice a year, the spring tides reveal part of the ocean floor between two islands in the The Isles of Scilly, which are usually 20 feet underwater. In true Scillonian spirit, it's an opportunity for a knees-up, so *British Travel Journal* headed to the archipelago to visit what must be the world's shortest pop-up

Text by Emma Henderson

Prepped with rolled up trousers, sandals in hand and bare feet, I'm splashing my way through receding shallow and clear sea waters with a cohort of hundreds of other people in front and behind, walking towards an emerging sandbar between two islands as the tide rolls out.

We're all meeting in the middle of two islands, Tresco and Bryher in the Isles of Scilly, for a good old fashioned knees-up. But what's unusual here is that a mere few hours ago, the sandbar we're just about to reach was 20 feet (six metres) under the sea.

I'm here for the bi-annual Low Tide Festival, celebrating the low spring tides where in April and September, the tides are so low that it reveals the ocean floor for just a few hours before the tide comes in, reclaiming the sand again. Though, that's plenty of time for the Scillonians to make a party out of it and dance on the sea bed.

As I walk over the dark beige sand, still wet from the recent tide, large pools of water contain the debris of the sea bed – dark purple and green seaweed brush over my feet and an array of shells protrude from the sand. People of all ages, from grandparents to babies and plenty of delighted dogs, make up the hordes walking out to the sandbar. To the uninitiated, it must look like some sort of religious pilgrimage – and in some ways it is, celebrating the lunar pull of mother nature.

The sun has just burnt off the early morning haze, and at 11.30am, an hour ahead of the lowest tidal point, there's not a cloud in the cobalt blue September sky. The salty sea air has a light breeze and the sun is blazing down on us all. Half of the attendees are meandering the same way as me from Tresco, while the other half are coming at a right angle from the opposite island, Bryher. There's a joyous buzz in the air, and not just because we're being treated to the best of September's late summer sunshine, but also to experience this rare celestial event.

To get here, I cycled from the centre of Tresco, which is the best way to get around the car-free island. It was from the path at a slightly higher vantage point over the beach

> “
> *As I walk over the dark beige sand, still wet from the recent tide, large pools of water contain the debris of the sea bed – dark purple and green seaweed brush over my feet and an array of shells protrude from the sand.*

that I first caught sight of the shallow sections of the ocean, with colours imitating the blues and greens of a peacock’s feathers, slowly draining away from a hump of sand between the two islands. People were already descending onto the sandbar, and from this distance, people looked more like tiny ants walking towards the middle.

Once I’d got to the beach and walked a few hundred metres to the sandbar myself, a bright green tractor is pulling a flatbed trailer of benches onto it, ready to be unloaded. Around us are brightly coloured green and yellow flags, marking the festival’s area and billow in the breeze. Staff from Tresco are quickly setting up their makeshift bar and unloading boxes of iced drinks to serve thirsty customers wanting to make the most of this later summer sun.

TRESCO POP-UP EVENTS
MUSSELS on THE SAND BAR
NEW YORK
LONDON 292 miles
LANDS END
HELL BAY BRYHER

Among the other stalls are pasties, sausage rolls, fudge, T-shirts, face-painting, Scilly Chilli hot sauce from Bryher, plus Tresco Abbey Garden gin. Isles of Scilly Boat Hire are also taking festival-goers out for a short ride on the deeper water in their rib, while local traditional fisherman, Jof Hicks, has his kayak setup to show people his plastic-free method of catching lobsters with hand-woven, plastic-free pots. Together, it’s a real taste of Scillonian life.

My first stop is the lobster and bacon roll stall, dished up by Island Fish who have a few boats and a restaurant on Bryher. The Pender family have been fishing here for three generations, and set up their stall in front of their bright green boat, now marooned and gently resting on its side on the sand. Only minutes after joining, a huge snaking queue has formed, keen for this delicious hyper local and fresh seafood.

Next we head to the lovingly named Sand Bar, championing local drinks including St.Ives Brewery’s Porth Pilsner, Hella Pale Ale to name a few. We balance a beer in the crook of our arms, holding shoes and chomping down on the hefty lobster and bacon roll. The highlight is the music – a barefoot trio folk band, Scuppered, singing and strumming guitars standing on the flatbed trailer the tractor brought in. When we’re there, they’re singing “Wellerman”, made famous by Scottish postman and singer Nathan Evans who, after posting himself singing it on TikTok back in 2020, became a huge hit. Around us, people are foot tapping away, dancing and joining in singing too – as are we.

The Low Tide event began in 2015, when it was a much smaller affair. Now, it's Hannah Penhaligon running the show as Events Coordinator on Tresco, who is also Deputy Manager at The New Inn pub on Tresco. This was her first event after taking on the role in September 2023. "In theory I had plenty of time to practise with the Low Tide Event in April, but this was cancelled due to poor weather conditions and so the pressure was really on to deliver the big one in September," she explains. "I hadn't ever managed to attend a Low Tide Event either due to work commitments at the pub." Yet with the weather gods onside, Hannah and team pulled it off spectacularly.

Hannah estimates several hundred people attended this year, and expects this to grow. "It's such a unique event that many of the guests book their Scilly holidays around it, with people getting off the Scillonian Ferry on St Marys, ditching their cases and jumping on a boat to be sure to make it," she adds. Though for just a few hours of fun, she says it's months of planning to make it happen. But what goes out, must come back in. And slowly, the ocean begins to swallow up the land as the tide starts to slowly seep in around us. Water pools start to swell, and nearby areas of sand begin to diminish. Fed, watered and bathed in sunshine, nature had decided the party was over and we begin to meander back to the fringes of the beach.

We dust off our feet, put our shoes back on and pick up our bicycles that were left propped up at the top of the beach unchained, which all felt very Enid Blyton-esque. After dropping the bikes off, we headed back to Tresco's quay for the tripper boat back to St Mary's, the largest of the Scilly islands. The quay here is the transport hub for the entire archipelago and is a busy interchange. Some people are queuing laden with luggage to board the Scillonian ferry back to the mainland, and others are waiting for smaller tripper boats and precariously make their way down the uneven steps built into the quayside. We waited for a minibus back to the airport, just a 5-minute ride away.

So busy is this time of year, there wasn't enough accommodation available on the island, so I've come as a day tripper, flying on the island's own Skybus route. With just 19-seats on the small aircraft, I had a bird's eye view over the tropical looking islands, making the short 20-minute flight from Land's End an event in itself.

In less than 15 minutes after stepping off the flight, I'm back at the incredible house I'm staying at, Gwynver Beach House, (part of Beach Retreats self-catering holiday lets) – a 5-minute drive from the airport. It overlooks the cliffs of Sennen Cove, one of Cornwall's most spectacular beaches, and is an utterly divine spot.

I finished the day off by raising a glass of Tarquin's Cornish G&T to the sunset right in front of us from the garden terrace. I couldn't think of a more suitable end to a rather magical day.

→ The Low Tide Festival 2025 will take place on 29 April and 9 September 2025. Emma Henderson was a guest of Skybus and Beach Retreats. Return flights from Land's End to St Mary's cost £140 return. A week at Gwynver Beach House starts from £1,614.76 for three nights in low season, beachretreats.co.uk

IMAGES © JAMES DARLING PHOTOGRAPHY (TRESCO & BRYHER POP-UP EVENT)

EDINBURGH *eats*

Home to one of the UK's most exciting and diverse food scenes, *British Travel Journal* embarks on a culinary exploration of Scotland's captivating capital

Text by Sophie Farrah

It's no secret that Edinburgh has an awful lot to offer. One could spend days simply wandering its winding streets, soaking up the palpable sense of history at every turn. My reason for visiting however, was an entirely gluttonous one.

With a long weekend to discover just some of the city's diverse culinary delights, I began with brunch. I made my way to Leith – Edinburgh's cool, creative district, home to a plethora of laid-back bars and independent restaurants. One of which is Ardfern; a cosy all-day cafe, bar and bottle shop, owned by acclaimed Scottish chef, Roberta Hall-McCarron. Here, amongst simple wooden tables and shelves of tempting wine bottles, I tucked into perfectly crisp hash browns with BBQ king oyster mushroom and Spenwood cheese, a heavenly crumpet topped with sweet and spicy mussels, and an excellent Bloody Mary.

Hall-McCarron also owns The Little Chartroom next-door; a sleek, sophisticated space with an eye-catching open kitchen at its heart and a terrific tasting menu. Refined, thoughtful, flavoursome dishes include cured mackerel with beetroot, apple, celery and smoked almond, and a sensational ginger cake with apple, caramel and buckwheat, expertly paired with a delicious Lebanese wine.

Just around the corner on Leith Walk, I popped into Hobz – an incredibly popular artisan bakery that specialises in naturally leavened bread, terrific pastries and excellent coffee. I grabbed a perfect peanut butter and miso cookie and a supersized almond pain au chocolat and devoured them both down by Leith's historic waterfront area, The Shore.

Soon, it was time for a wee dram. Across town, Holyrood Distillery opened in 2019 as the first new distillery in the city in nearly one hundred years. It's conveniently nestled at the foot of Arthur's Seat, so once you've hiked to the top and worked up a thirst, pop in for a whisky flight or an excellent cocktail at the friendly, expertly run bar.

Guided tours provide fascinating insight into how this modern, forward-thinking distillery is doing things differently, like using heritage and speciality malts, and experimenting with different yeasts to create delicious whiskies, gins, innovative 'new make' spirits and more.

Nearby, you'll find Edinburgh's Royal Mile. This historic and now famously touristy street connects Edinburgh Castle and The Palace of Holyrood House. At the Castle end, tucked away in a collection of beautiful buildings that date back to 1595, sits one of the capital's most famous – and most romantic – restaurants, The Witchery. Crossing its historic threshold feels like stepping back in time; filled with ancient oak panelling, ornate tapestries, unusual antiques, fresh flowers and flickering candlelight, it is irresistibly atmospheric and an incredibly magical setting for a meal. Immersed in gothic opulence, I feasted on hand dived Orkney scallops, Balmoral Estate partridge schnitzel and a decadent chocolate torte. I felt as though I had been transported into a fairytale.

GIN
HEIGHT OF ARROWS

CHEESE
I. J. MELLIS & SON

More breath-taking interiors can be found in Edinburgh's Old Town. Sister to the iconic Perthshire hotel, Gleneagles Townhouse opened here in 2022 in a staggeringly grand former bank building. Its restaurant, The Spence, with its ornate plasterwork, towering marble pillars and vast domed ceiling, has to be one of the most spectacular settings in the UK, let alone Scotland.

Afternoon tea is here a real treat – an elegant, carefully crafted affair of bite-sized buttery croissants filled with smoked salmon, crème fraiche and herring caviar; warm pork and sage sausage rolls; melt-in-the-mouth malt chocolate choux buns and more, all paired perfectly with loose leaf tea and chilled Veuve Clicquot. At dinner, the fresh Scottish langoustines topped with crispy seaweed are not to be missed, and if you've still got room, order the legendary baked Alaska, which is theatrically torched at the table.

Scotland may not be synonymous with sunshine but whatever the weather, it's always ice cream time in my book. I wandered down Victoria Street – the colourful winding road thought to be the inspiration behind J.K. Rowling's famous Diagon Alley – took a right on to the famous Grassmarket and immediately spotted the queue outside Mary's Milk Bar. This kitsch, colourful little parlour sells artisan chocolates and fresh gelato made by Mary herself. The flavours change daily and seasonally: when I visited, a scoop of gently spiced saffron and nutmeg was definitely worth the wait.

Just a short walk from Edinburgh's city centre, the leafy suburb of Stockbridge has a charming village feel. With cobbled streets, elegant Georgian architecture and pretty gardens, there's also a great mix of independent shops and restaurants to discover.

Unmissable sweet treats await at Lannan – a beautifully designed bakery that produces laminated pastries that both look and taste exquisite. Get there early as the shelves are often empty by late morning. Cheese lovers should follow their nose just around the corner to I.J Mellis: this picture-perfect speciality cheese shop has been sourcing and selling the finest farmhouse and artisan Scottish cheese for over 30 years. Brilliant new knife and kitchenware shop Messer on St Stephen Street is also worth a visit – as is the cosy basement restaurant opposite called Skua, if you fancy fresh and flavoursome tuna belly ceviche and a glass of natural wine or an inventive cocktail.

Nearby, Fhior is one of the most exciting restaurants in the city. With sleek, Scandi-inspired interiors and an irresistibly upbeat soundtrack of disco and rock, the playful,

> *The chocolate and macaron mushrooms, served with toasted pine marshmallows and skewered with pine sprigs, were almost too pretty to eat... almost.*

laid-back tasting menu experience here takes locally sourced ingredients and transforms them into carefully crafted dishes filled with imagination and an emphasis on no waste. Diligently presented by an incredibly friendly and efficient team, some of my favourite courses included a plate of sweet, earthy beetroot cleverly prepared three ways and dotted with a rich langoustine emulsion, and a chunk of buttery trout with crispy skin, sat in a rich fish bone consommé and topped with homemade togarashi (everything at Fhior is made in house – even the soy sauce). The chocolate and macaron mushrooms, served with toasted pine marshmallows and skewered with pine sprigs, were almost too pretty to eat... almost.

My grand gastronomic finale was exactly that. Acclaimed Scottish chef Stuart Ralston owns four of Edinburgh's top restaurants: Aizle, Noto, Tipo and LYLA. I headed for the latter, which was awarded a Michelin star earlier this year. This mind-bogglingly exquisite fine dining experience unfolds in a handsome townhouse on Edinburgh's Royal Terrace; the evening begins upstairs in a chic contemporary drawing room, home to a sleek bar and the restaurant's imposing ageing fridges, fully stocked with hunks of meat, whole fish and bottles of Krug, naturally. Here, aperitifs and an array of intricate 'snacks' are served – I still often think about the mouthful of croustade, filled with sweet lobster and pickled kohlrabi, topped with a mound of glistening orange orbs of sake-washed trout roe.

The experience then moves downstairs to an intimate and extremely elegant dining room, which has an open kitchen at one end. LYLA's extended tasting menu utilises the very best line-caught fish and sustainable shellfish sourced from the Scottish Isles to create some of the most delicious, complex and joyful dishes I've ever eaten. Balanced on a playful podium, a hefty Scottish langoustine came wrapped in a crisp kataifi pastry topped with grated dehydrated scallop roe and a dollop of burnt apple ketchup on the side – an indescribably delicious ode to the chip shops of Scotland's east coast. Further delights included a delectable chawanmushi (a

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savoury Japanese custard) with smoked trout and purslane; linguine-like ribbons of the softest squid floating in rich and salty preserved truffle and onion dashi; and a huge hand-dived scallop, glazed in ponzu and barbecued, plumply sat in a caviar and roe-filled vinaigrette, topped with N25 caviar and a creamy Choron sauce – talk about decadent. An equally impressive wine pairing expertly delivered by friendly and extremely knowledgeable sommelier Stuart Skea elevated the meal from extraordinary to unforgettable.

I chose to raise a final toast to Edinburgh at Hey Palu – a welcoming and lively little cocktail bar in the Old Town. I started with a Negroni flight – three small but perfectly formed measures of the iconic cocktail, including a terrific strawberry version. But it was the Nutella Old Fashioned that really hit the spot; fun, surprising and unforgettably delicious – much like my stay in this magnificent city. ◆

WHERE TO *stay*

Hotels we love

1 FINGAL

Moored up in Leith, just two miles from the city centre, you'll find Fingal – a luxury floating hotel that blends old-world maritime charm with sleek superyacht glamour. There are 22 sumptuous, beautifully styled cabins and an elegant 2 AA Rosette restaurant and bar on board. There are plans this year to transform the boat's original bridge into a unique private dining space, which will offer guests a unique and immersive gastronomic journey.

→ *From £300 room only; fingal.co.uk*

STAR SPOTTING...

Edinburgh has more one-Michelin-star restaurants than any other city in Scotland. It is home to seven in total, including **The Kitchin**, **Restaurant Martin Wishart**, **Condita**, **Heron** and **Timberyard**, plus this year's new additions, **Avery** and **LYLA**.

2 VIRGIN HOTEL EDINBURGH

In the heart of the Old Town, this fun and friendly hotel has an unbeatable location. The 222 cleverly designed rooms (or 'chambers') feel chic and modern, and come with a fully stocked and reasonably priced Smeg fridge mini bar. The creative cocktails in the buzzy Commons Club bar are not to be missed, whilst the impressive roof terrace offers fabulous views of the Castle.

→ *From £300 room only; virginhotels.com*

③ KIMPTON CHARLOTTE SQUARE

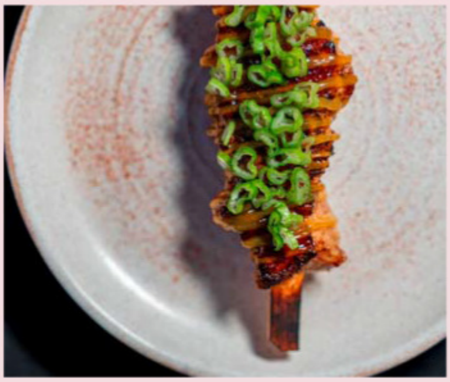
This stylish, laid-back hotel sits in a lovely Georgian townhouse overlooking a leafy square in the New Town. The 199 bedrooms have a cosy boutique feel whilst a subterranean spa offers a sleek swimming pool, sauna, steam room and more. It's also home to Aizle – Stuart Ralston's highly acclaimed hyper seasonal restaurant.

→ *From £195, inc. breakfast; kimptoncharlottesquare.com*

④ GLENEAGLES TOWNHOUSE

Surrounded by the swishy shops of the New Town, this glamorous hotel-meets-member's club offers deeply luxurious accommodation in a beautiful former bank. There are 33 elegant and opulent bedrooms, a cutting-edge wellness space in the basement, and guests also have access to the members-only rooftop bar. The breakfast (also available to non res) is one of the best in the city.

→ *From £495 room only; gleneagles.com/townhouse*



More Edi eats

MIRIN This lovely little restaurant tucked away along Leith Walk serves creative Asian-influenced small plates packed with flavour.

ALBY'S Head to this hip hole in the wall in Leith for hefty homemade sandwiches.

ROSELEAF This friendly restaurant and bar is full of quirk and character. It serves seasonal and locally sourced food, cocktails in teapots and a generous brunch.

NAUTICUS BAR This chic and cosy bar in Leith is a true champion of local liquor and produce. Regular live music sessions add to the lively atmos.

LITTLE CAPO Opened at the end of 2024, this new all-day restaurant-bar in the city centre is home to Italian-inspired small plates, classic Italian cocktails and lovely interiors.

KAY'S BAR For a proper pint and plenty of atmosphere, head to this traditional Scottish pub in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town.

THE PALMERSTON In the West End, this beautifully converted former bank is now a buzzy restaurant and bar that serves good coffee, great pastries and an ever-changing menu of delicious European-influenced dishes.

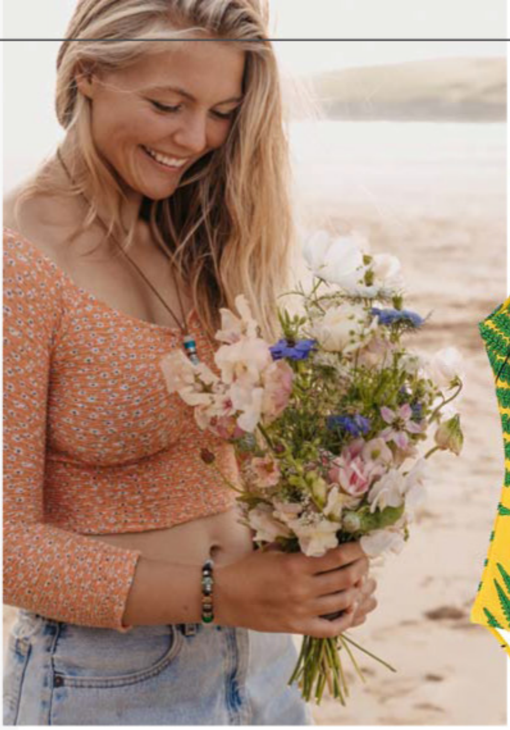
FIN & GRAPE In the Bruntsfield area of the city, this neighbourhood restaurant focuses on delicious small plates, great wine and whole fish designed for sharing.

BRITISH TRAVEL JOURNAL

Travel HOT LIST

Our edit of stylish, joyful and practical pieces to stow in your suitcase for spring adventures

Text by Amy Bonifas



1 Handmade El Camino bracelet, from £32.99, *elcaminobracelets.com*. Adding a travel twist to the original charm bracelet, add 'steps' (or charms) for every country, landmark or ocean you've experienced along the way.

2 Fern swimsuit, £60, *batoko.com*. Fully lined with great support, these playful swimsuits are consciously produced in small batches and are available in sizes XS to 3XL.

3 Reunion portable speaker in Duck Egg, £79.99, *robertsradio.com*. Pop this modern, waterproof speaker in your suitcase for tunes on the go and up to 18 hours of playtime.

4 Skybird waterproof jacket in Blue Stone, £175, *finisterre.com*. Finisterre's recycled jacket is breathable and easily packed into a rucksack, helping you stay ready for those inevitable spring showers.

5 Wild floral picnic blanket, £49.50, *sophieallport.com*. Picture sunnier days – picnics, festivals and lazy afternoons in the park. Plus, it's waterproof, just in case!

6 Wellness Tea Collection, 25 bags, £7.50, *newbyteas.com*. Restore your balance while away and gift yourself a moment of calm with every cup – from the blissful sleep blend to the rejuvenating Yoga Relax.

10 Nature bird cap in Navy, £27, *rspbteemillstore.com*. Protect against the sun's rays and support the incredible work of the RSPB with this versatile cap.

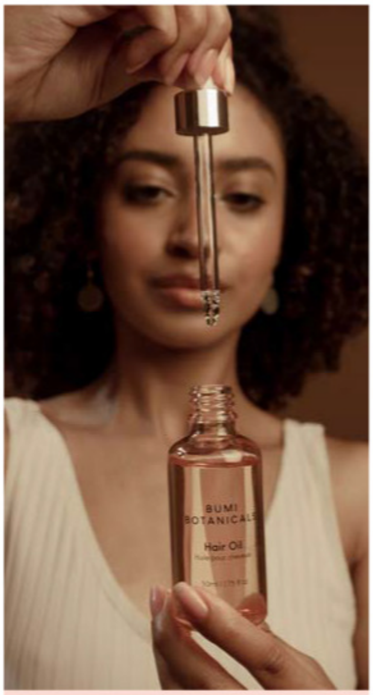
11 Puffin credit card wallet, £8, *shopping.rspb.org.uk*. Time to update your purse to this lightweight case – the aluminium casing stops unwanted cloning of your details. Win-win!

7 Gouthwaite backpack - Mini II in Rust/black, £95, *wildishstore.com.* Based in the Yorkshire Dales, Wildish make bags to last a lifetime. The weather-proof Mini is ideal for day adventures.

8 Packing cubes, £35, *aersf.co.uk*. If you struggle with crumpled clothes or overpacking, get yourself a set of durable (and stylish) packing cubes.

12 **Wonderbalm, 50ml, £29, *wonderbalm.com*. If you're tight on travel space, this multi-purpose balm – inspired by Korean skincare secrets – can be used as a skin moisturiser, hair mask, lip balm, make-up primer and more.**

WONDERBALM
KOREAN BEAUTY
ALL PURPOSE + NATURAL



13 **Bumi Botanicals Hair Oil, 50ml, £34.99, *bumibotanicals.com* Made with ancient Ayurvedic ingredients like fenugreek and hibiscus flower, this 100% natural oil is a powerhouse for a healthier scalp and hair.**

9 Tracker leather low unisex hiking shoes, £170, *vivobarefoot.com/uk*. Giving you a barefoot feeling, these lightweight hiking shoes help with natural movement and building strength.

BRAMLEY

BOTANICAL MAGIC

Made by nature, crafted by Bramley

bramleyproducts.com

SLEEPY HEAD
PILLOW SPRAY
LAVENDER, FRANKINCENSE & CHAMOMILE
MADE BY
COOPERS

15 Sleep Head pillow spray, 60ml, £19, *madebycoopers.com*. Spritz this award-winning spray onto your pillow and feel yourself unwind with the soothing scents of organic lavender, chamomile and frankincense.

ains/ie + ains/ie
NIGHT POWDER
DE-STRESS + RECOVER

14 Ainslie + Ainslie Night Powder, 28 nights, £89, *ainslieainslie.com*. A scoop before bed – containing research-backed ingredients like saffron and tart cherry powder – could help reduce stress and improve sleep, wherever you choose to rest your head.

16 Red lobster sleep mask, £12, *myza.co* Crafted from 100% organic cotton, every weary traveller needs a soothing sleep mask – and why not choose a print that will make you smile, too?

HAND CREAM
NORFOLK

EDITOR *LOVES*

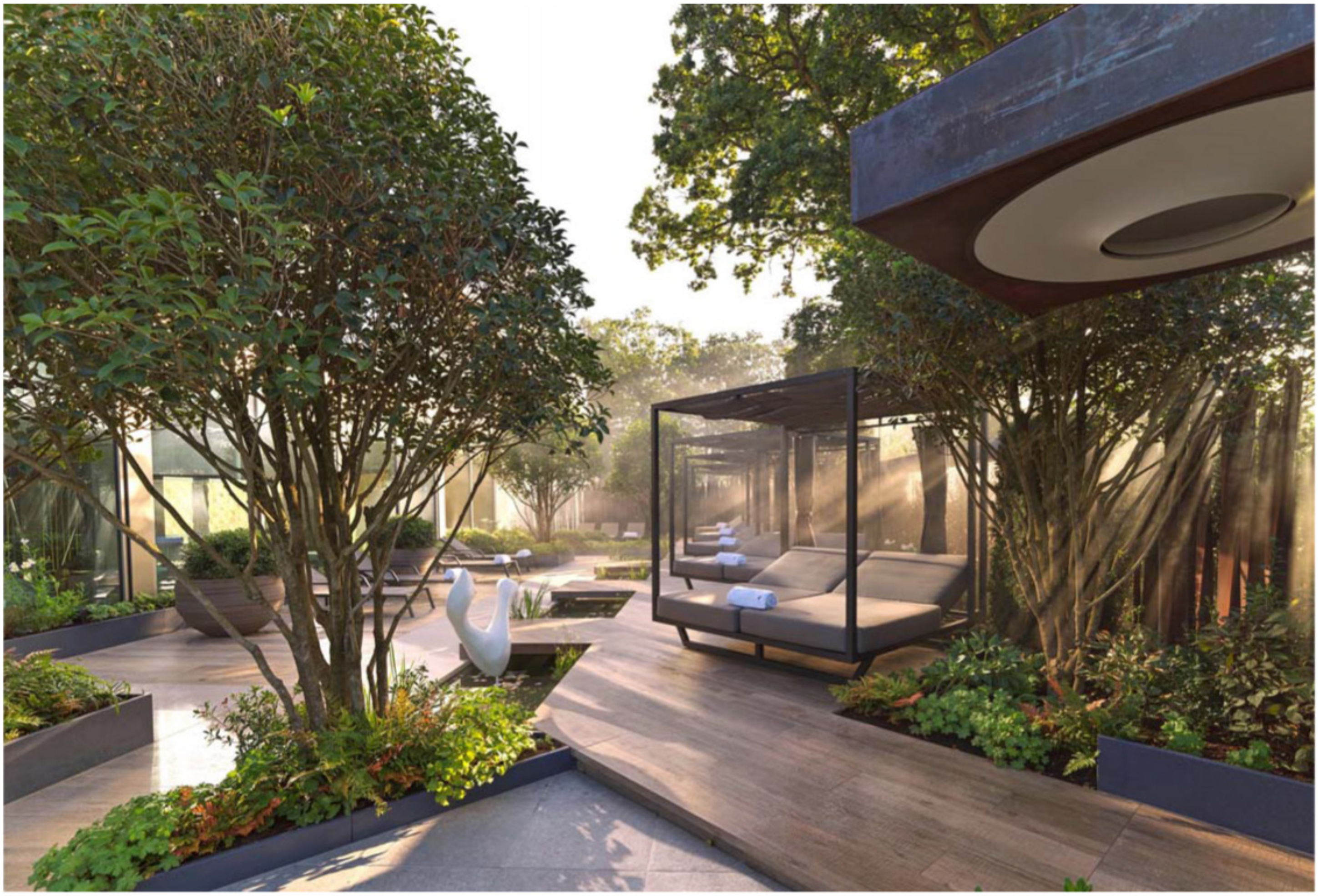
17 Clearwater changing robe in Manuka, £60, *finisterre.com*. Meaning 'end of the Earth', Finisterre is the expert at creating hard-working pieces to help you stay cosy during wild swims and beach days.

18 Series 2 coffee cup in Peach, 340ml, £32, *chillys.com* Newly designed with incredible insulation, your coffee will always stay piping on road trips and day hikes.

finisterre

19 Nourishing hand cream, 30ml, £9, *norfolknaturalliving.com* Nourish wind-chapped hands with this pocket-sized powerhouse cream made with vitamin E-rich cocoa seed oil and shea butter – crafted in a tiny workshop in Norfolk.

20 Bath salts, 250g, £22, land-and-water.co.uk. Soothe adventure-tired limbs with a luxurious blend of calming lavender, linden and uplifting orange essential oils.



Competition time

Nurture your soul and prioritise your wellbeing with PoB Hotels. This is your opportunity to indulge in a luxurious spa break, designed to rejuvenate your mind and spirit, enabling you to unwind fully and reconnect with your true self

From silent retreats to nature-led adventures, wellness-related travel is now at the top of everyone's list. While trends come and go, treating yourself to a peaceful getaway complete with unique experiences, impeccable design and pampering spas is always a good idea.

PoB Hotels knows that wellness is deeply personal. They believe in the importance of nurturing every aspect of one's soul, from spiritual serenity and cognitive clarity to environmental harmony and physical vitality.

That's why they're proud to introduce the *Nurture Your Soul* collection – bringing together a variety of unforgettable wellness breaks. Whether you're longing for tranquil walks in nature, rejuvenating spa time or uplifting yoga flows, there's something for every traveller to discover.

Each property embodies holistic wellbeing, offering different ways to explore wellness and helping you find balance away from the daily grind. With a breadth of wellness stays across the British Isles, you'll find everything from peaceful havens nestled in the countryside to invigorating coastal escapes. PoB Hotels has partnered with some of the UK's most sought-after, high-profile, leading wellness experts to host a series of exclusive retreats across the different properties.

Win a £200 Gift Voucher · Scan here to enter ·

Retreat hosts include actor and wellness guru Gemma Merna. The life coach and yoga and meditation teacher founded Mind and Wellness, an online community helping women prioritise their mental and physical wellbeing. She is passionate about guiding others to find their sense of calm and build resilience against life's everyday stressors.

Celebrity Pilates, yoga, and mindfulness teacher Nathalie Clough will also join as a host. Believing that movement can bring incredible change, Nathalie will share her knowledge of classical and contemporary Pilates and her advice for helping you connect with your body to boost strength and confidence.

The retreats will pair pure indulgence with revitalising movement and knowledge sharing. Try an energising Pilates class or wake up with sunrise yoga, sink into a blissful sound healing session or book into a luxurious spa treatment. The new retreats are all about helping you carve out time for yourself to help you reset and recharge. You'll also have the chance to try delicious, nutrient-packed dishes crafted by award-winning chefs, as well as soak up all the knowledge from the experts so you can kickstart healthier long-term habits and reach your wellness goals.

Enter for your chance to win...

THE GIFT OF WELLNESS

British Travel Journal has teamed up with PoB Hotels to offer you the chance to win a £200 Pampers Paradise gift voucher to spend on a spa experience of your choice at a beautiful PoB hotel.
You no longer need only to imagine indulging in the luxurious charm of PoB Hotels' carefully selected properties and could instead be experiencing their renowned hospitality firsthand.
→ Enter via our website britishtraveljournal.com/competitions. Last entries 31 May 2025. Voucher valid for 12 months from date of issue. Over 18s only.

READY TO PRIORITISE SOME MUCH-NEEDED ME-TIME?

PoB Hotels takes pride in crafting the perfect experiences for guests – just as it has for over 40 years. They match exceptional destinations with enriching journeys, and wellbeing becomes an art form. Here's to your next PoB Hotels wellness break where you can take the time to treat yourself and truly nurture your soul.
→ To find out more about PoB Hotels, visit pobhotels.com.

A RIVER *runs through it*

Combining all the goodness of the great outdoors with luxurious comfort and style, *British Travel Journal* heads to Avington Estate in Hampshire for a weekend of wild wellness

Text by Sophie Farrah

"We can have the lakeside sauna ready to go for 9am tomorrow," cheerfully explains Avington's Estate Manager, Natalie, when I arrive.

The idea is to alternate between said sauna and a lake, I am told. The Scandis have been making this hot-to-cold ritual chic for centuries, and it seems that we are finally catching on.

I'd like to point out that I visited Avington in January, so said lake was almost frozen over. Feeling slightly frazzled having left London less than two hours previously, I wasn't remotely ready to even consider taking my clothes off let alone plunge into icy water. I shuddered at the thought and shoved it to the back of my mind. Perhaps this wilder approach to wellness was a step too far for me...

Spanning 175 acres of bucolic countryside in Hampshire's Itchen Valley, not far from Winchester, Avington Estate is reinventing the concept of the luxury wellness retreat by offering a variety of boutique accommodation and complete immersion in nature.

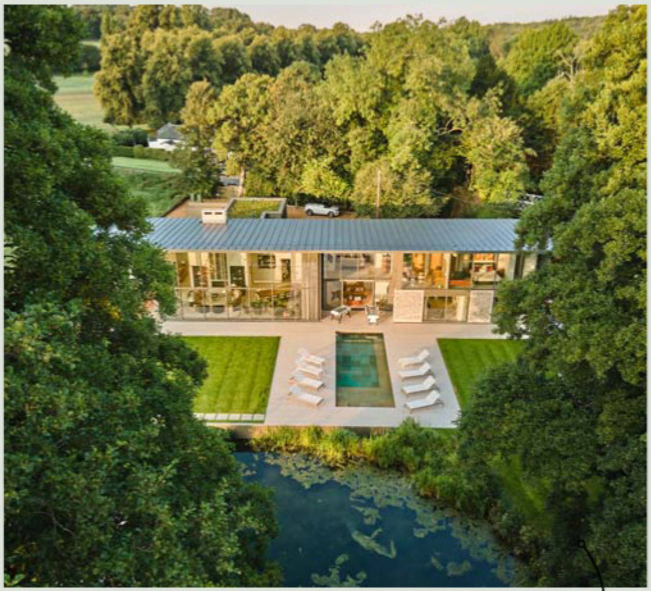
Its greatest and most captivating asset is the setting itself – the Estate's peaceful and unspoilt landscape is dotted with silvery lakes and sheep lazily grazing beneath towering ancient trees. The river Itchen provides the wellness focal point; its many tributaries meander through rolling green fields that stretch as far as the eye can see, and in the middle of it all sits the magnificent Avington House.

Today it's a popular wedding venue, but this grand Palladian mansion was once the bolthole of King Charles II and his famous mistress, Nell Gwynn. It was also the 1940s home of Rolls-Royce heiress, Lady Eleanor Shelley-Rolls.

Avington's new owner is hotelier Nicolas Roach, the man behind boutique Bournemouth hotspot, The Nici. In Hampshire, Roach is gently, sensitively and very cleverly creating a new and unique hospitality offering across the historic Estate. It offers plenty of outdoorsy fun but with a stately home sophistication; guests can go cycling, boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, fishing and more, whilst various decked platforms furnished with chic wooden sunbeds are dotted along on the banks of the river, creating an idyllic scene. There's also a gym and a studio space where regular yoga and stretch classes take place, and there are meditation pods and cabins for treatments due to arrive soon.

With my swimming costume left firmly in the car, I strolled along a tree-dappled pathway to the Estate's fishery. Here, in a smartly dressed café and shop fully stocked with Hunter wellies and dog coats, I met friendly fishing instructor Alfie, who furnished me with a fetching gilet and spent the next two hours teaching me the basics of fly fishing. With three beautiful lakes stocked with both rainbow and brown trout, Avington's fishery is long-established as one of the best spots in the country for the sport.

If I am being honest, I had never really understood the appeal of fishing, but the process – repeatedly casting and 'stripping the line' – gave my busy brain just enough to think about, but not too much. Combine this with the picture-perfect lakeside setting and beautiful birdsong soundscape, and you've got yourself an almost meditative hobby. I was hooked – the fish, however, were not. One big trout teased by taking a nibble but then disappeared in a flash. Next time, I thought...



Check-in time arrived and so I headed to the estate office to collect my key. When it comes to accommodation, Avington really does offer something for everyone, from the wow factor Malibu-mansion-esque Stillwaters House, which sleeps 14 and has its own heated pool overlooking a shimmering lake, to cosy cabins (refurbed fishing lodges) sat right on the riverbank, smartly furnished with vintage rods and tweed touches.

I checked into one of three luxurious (and pet friendly) shepherds' huts tucked away amongst peaceful woodland, each with a private deck dangling over the water's edge. Inside, I discovered a supremely comfortable king-size bed, a modern kitchen better equipped than my own at home, and a bijou shower room stocked with luxurious Wildsmith Skin products. The cosy khaki green hut's interiors are stylish but homely; trinkets and books line the shelves, chic and sumptuous fabrics add a sense of cosiness, and a little wood burner kicks out a good amount of heat. There's high-speed

> *I had never really understood the appeal of fishing, but the process – repeatedly casting and 'stripping the line' – gave my busy brain just enough to think about… I was hooked – the fish, however, were not.*

WiFi and above a small table for two hangs a good-sized TV, which I didn't turn on once. Double French doors bring the outside in, and a curved skylight above the bed, designed for bird spotting and star gazing, ensures that one feels totally ensconced in nature.

Outside, the private wood-fired hot tub had already been lit. I sunk into it beneath moss-covered tree trunks and let the pleasing smell of woodsmoke fill my nostrils. All I could hear was birdsong and the gentle flutter of nearby ducks.

Soon it was time to eat. A short, picturesque drive later (or 40-minute-ish walk), I found myself in the chocolate box village of Easton, where I pulled up outside The Chestnut Horse – the estate-owned pub. The heat of multiple open fireplaces hit me as soon as I pushed open the heavy door, and so did the sound of happy chatter. Thanks to a recent extensive refurb, this large country pub now has a modern 'wing' that spills on to a lovely big terrace, but there are still plenty of cosy nooks and crannies to be found, and the lively bar is filled with locals.

There's a good mix of hearty pub classics and more sophisticated dishes on offer. Friendly staff tell me that the ale-braised beef featherblade is excellent, but I couldn't resist the Avington trout that had eluded my rod earlier. I had it as both a starter – beautifully cured – and as a main, flaked into a huge, comforting bowl of tagliatelle with broccoli and a

THE CHESTNUT HORSE
THE CHESTNUT HORSE
VILLAGE SHOP
CAFÉ
& DELI

creamy white wine sauce. I also managed the delicious apple crumble, served with a velvety scoop of locally made vanilla ice cream.

The pub's recent refurb has also produced a handful of chic bedrooms upstairs and a 'village shop' area, which stocks a variety of local treats ranging from fresh bread and fruit and veg to store cupboard staples and fresh deli-style snacks. I grabbed half a dozen eggs – 'fresh yolks for local folks', the box declared. Back at my cosy little hut, I lit the firepit by the stream, slid into one of the comfortable Adirondack chairs, and listened to the sounds of my neighbours – a pair of owls hooting at each other across the trees.

After a deeply peaceful night's sleep, a bountiful breakfast hamper arrived. I hastily unpacked it like a child on Christmas morning, revealing squidgy pastries, fresh fruit, crunchy granola, thick yoghurt and more.

Before long, it was 9am and the lakeside sauna was calling. I don't know whether it's because I felt considerably more relaxed than when I arrived, but the thought of a (very) cold dip didn't feel that daunting anymore. In fact, having spent much of my time admiring Avington's tranquil lakes, I was quite looking forward to getting in one.

A five-minute stroll later and I found the 'Riverside Wellness' area, where the sound of rushing water created an instantly zen-like atmosphere. As promised, the spacious barrel-shaped sauna sat on the edge of the lake was fired up and ready to go. I stepped in, breathing in that lovely scent of warm wood, and was immediately in awe of the beautiful lake and countryside views through the vast window at one end.

The soothing heat warmed my bones and soon I broke into a sweat. The appeal of the cool lake began to grow and before long I felt compelled to hurry across the smart wooden deck and clamber down the very civilised swimming pool ladder, into the icy water below. I cannot describe how cold it was. But after the initial shock and a few deep, steady breaths, I felt nothing short of incredible.

Thanks to the flat, crystal-clear water, there was no fear of 'what lies beneath' or that feeling of terror when something brushes past your leg. In a state of bliss, I floated over a bed of smooth pebbles, studying the undulating grassy banks around me and the canopy of trees above. Before long, I scampered back to the sauna and relished in the deeply satisfying feeling of warming up. I repeated the process a few times, alternating between hot and cold – Scandi-style – before pulling on my clothes and heading back to my hut for one final soak in the hot tub.

Feeling utterly invigorated, I set off on a walk following a route from the hut's info folder. It took me through the private grounds of Avington House, which guests are allowed to explore during certain times. What a treat it was to stroll through the elegant rose garden, amongst splendid statues and tinkling fountains.

I then passed pretty cottages, peaceful wetlands, rushing weirs and endless unspoilt vistas that looked like painted scenes of days gone by. It was the perfect country walk.

Getting back into my car, I couldn't believe how much more relaxed and grounded I felt since arriving at Avington just 24 hours earlier. I caught the smell of wood smoke on my scarf and smiled. Going forward, I thought to myself, I'd like more of my weekends to be this wild. ◆

→ *Rates at Avington start at £95 for a room at The Chestnut Horse, £250 per night for a shepherd's hut or lakeside cabin, £1,750 for Stillwaters House; avington.com*

LIFE *experiences*

Whether you're looking to learn a new skill, solve a crime or uncover the secrets of the past, *British Travel Journal* discovers some of this year's most exciting and diverse experience breaks.

Text by Sophie Farrah

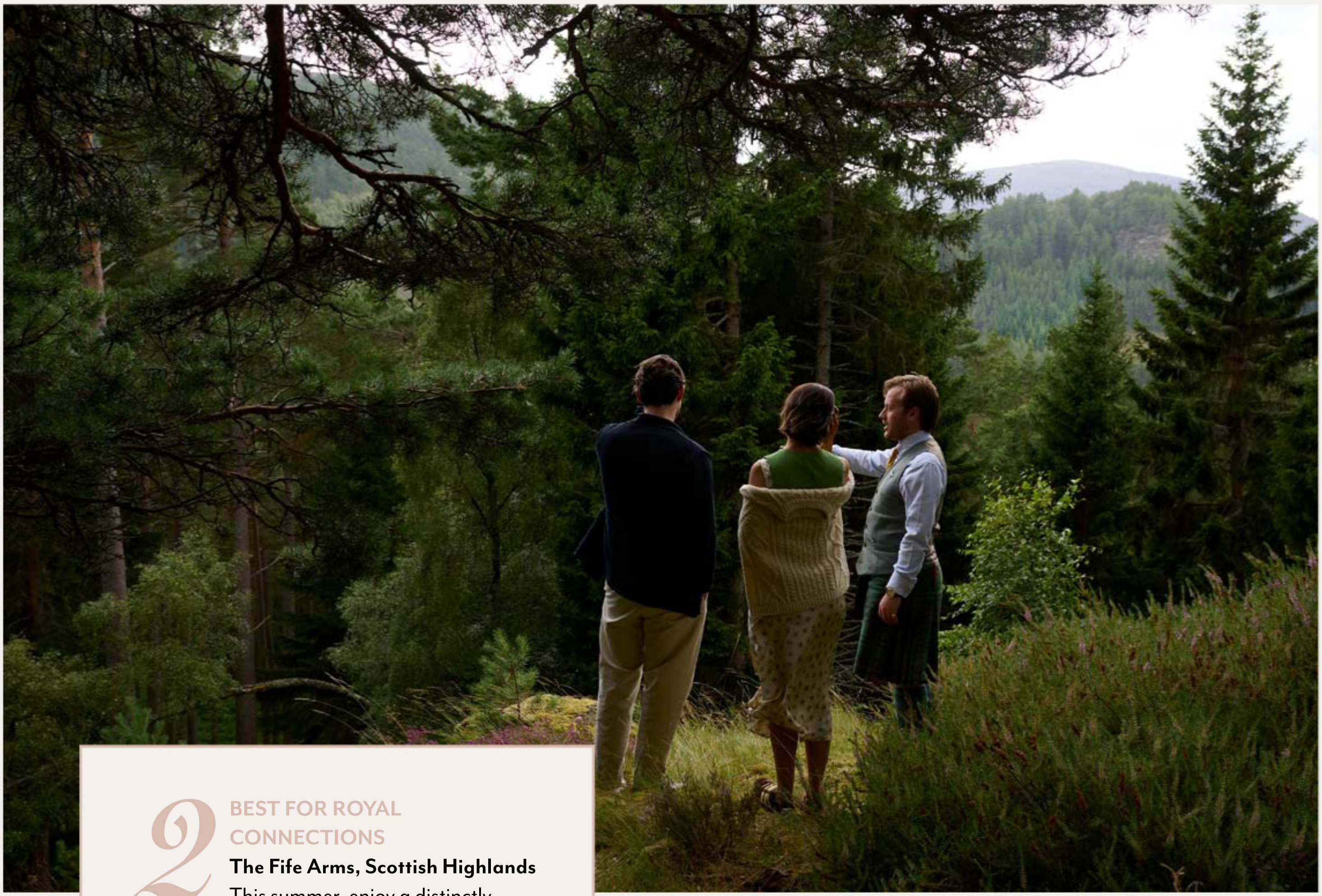
1

BEST FOR FORAGING FINDS

THE PIG - at Bridge Place, Kent

Thanks to its bountiful kitchen gardens, THE PIG has long championed simple, fresh and local ingredients. This year, the luxurious, B-Corp certified hotel group has teamed up with internationally renowned wild foods teacher, author and expert Miles Irving to create a 'Keep it Wild' break. Taking place at its lovely Kentish outpost, THE PIG - at Bridge Place, this food-filled one-night stay includes a hands-on foraging experience where guests will learn how to identify what's in season and how to find delicious, hidden gems that can be enjoyed straight from forest to fork. A freshly foraged lunch will be served in the great outdoors followed by a three-course dinner later that evening cooked by head chef Andy and hosted by Miles, with a menu packed full of locally foraged and homegrown goodies. THE PIG's famously substantial breakfast is also included.

→ *12 May 2025, from £815 per room, based on two people sharing a charming Hop Pickers' Hut; thepighotel.com*



2 BEST FOR ROYAL CONNECTIONS

The Fife Arms, Scottish Highlands

This summer, enjoy a distinctly regal stay at luxury Highlands hotel, The Fife Arms. Its 'Bonnie Royal Experience' grants guests the unique opportunity to tour selected interior rooms within Balmoral Castle, the Scottish home of the Royal Family. Originally purchased for Queen Victoria by Prince Albert in 1852, guests will have exclusive access to private guided tours of the Castle and get an exclusive look at royal life. This very special experience also includes a guided woodland walk in the beautiful Cairngorms National Park, plus lunch at Fish Shop in Ballater, or a luxurious Champagne afternoon tea back at the exquisite, art-filled hotel.

→ *From £550pp, available on selected dates throughout the summer; thefifearms.com*

3 BEST FOR DESIGN LOVERS

The Star, Sussex

A stay at Olga Polizzi's stunning Sussex bolthole, The Star (left), would be enough to delight any interiors appreciator but on the boutique hotel's three-night 'Historic Houses' break, guests get to have a snoop around several other extraordinary properties as well.

This exclusive experience starts with a visit to Friston Place, the magnificent Jacobean private home of Olga Polizzi herself, for a tour of the stunning gardens followed by a glass of Rathfinny in the Great Hall. The following days include private tours of beautiful local properties such as Michelham Priory, Firle Place, Charleston (above), Farleys House and Gallery and more, interspersed with leisurely lunches, delicious dinners and time to enjoy several lovely walks in the surrounding countryside

→ *29 April-2 May, from £2280 for three nights' accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner each day, and entrance to the houses. Based on two guests sharing a classic Juliet room; thepolizzicollection.com/the-star*

4 BEST FOR FINDING FOCUS

Broughton Sanctuary, Yorkshire

Join Sensei Zen Takai, a 16th generation samurai and ninja, for an immersive four-night Zen Samurai retreat at the serene 3,000-acre Broughton Sanctuary in Yorkshire. Delve into ancient teachings that blend samurai philosophy, mindfulness and nature to encourage a more focused and purposeful life. Explore timeless arts and practical wisdom through guided sessions designed to harmonise mind, body and spirit. Set against the beautiful and unspoilt landscape of the Yorkshire Dales, this truly unique experience promises profound insights and personal transformation, and the opportunity to reconnect, embrace simplicity and find clarity through the way of the Zen Samurai.

→ *28 May-1 June, from £1,000 for one person staying in a retreat house with a shared bathroom, up to £4,300 for two people sharing a deluxe ensuite in Broughton Hall. All meals included; broughtonsanctuary.co.uk*

5 BEST FOR MURDER MOST FOUL

Burgh Island Hotel, Devon

Fancy yourself as an amateur sleuth? Unleash your inner detective at one of Burgh Island's murder mystery weekends, where you'll be tasked with restoring peace to this lovely little island following a heinous crime. This thrilling two-night experience unfolds at the Art Deco gem that is the Burgh Island Hotel, which sits just off the South Devon coastline. Guests can explore the tiny tidal island, decode messages and decipher clues to reveal the name of the culprit. Adding to the ambience, crime writer Agatha Christie often visited Burgh Island, using it as the setting and inspiration for some of her famous tales. She wrote two of her books in the hotel's beach house which guests can now stay in, making it a perfect setting for a thrilling murder mystery. Throughout the immersive weekend, guests can also enjoy live music, quizzes and Agatha Christie film screenings, whilst period-accurate Art Deco clothing and accessories are available to buy or hire.

→ *Various dates throughout the year, from £1,330 based on two nights including B&B, dinner, a welcome drink, plus a signature cocktail and canapés at the start of the mystery; burghisland.com*

6 BEST FOR A CELEBRATION OF FOOD

The Rick Stein Cookery School, Cornwall

This year is the 50th anniversary of Rick Stein's iconic The Seafood Restaurant in Padstow. To celebrate, the famed seafood chef's cookery school (also in Padstow, overlooking the twinkling waters of the Camel Estuary) is hosting a special one-day course that will see budding cooks of all abilities learn how to prepare classic dishes from the iconic restaurant's menus over the years; think Goan lobster, seafood thermidor, mussels with tomato and basil and more. A 'School & Stay' package includes a place on this limited-edition celebratory course, as well as overnight accommodation in a beautiful, coastal inspired bedroom near the harbour, designed by Jill and Kate Stein.

→ *School & Stay package starts at £473. The 50th Anniversary Celebration course costs £225pp, which includes a copy of The Seafood Restaurant 50th Anniversary book. Available on various dates throughout the year until 5 Dec 2025; rickstein.com*

7 BEST FOR HISTORY BUFFS

The Mermaid Inn, Sussex

Intrigued by the past? Join archaeologist Dr Christopher Cole on a fascinating five-day journey back in time, set in an almost forgotten corner of southeast England. Guests will discover the captivating local history of Romney Marsh, which includes ancient kings, military intrigue, scheming politicians, Nazi spies, murderous pirates, inspired authors and more, as well as exploring a group of Norman and Medieval churches, each with its own intriguing story to tell. The base for this unique trip is the charming and historic coastal town of Rye, where guests will spend five nights at The Mermaid Inn, said to be one of the most haunted buildings in Britain.

→ *30 June and 1 September 2025, from £1,175 per person; hiddenhistory.co.uk*

8 BEST FOR BERGERAC FANS

St. Brelade's Bay Hotel, Jersey

Jersey's iconic crime drama series returned to our screens earlier this year and to celebrate, St. Brelade's Bay Hotel – a beautiful and historic property set right on the picturesque coastline of this charming island – is offering the opportunity to step into the screen on a special 'Bergerac Break'. Guests will be invited to explore the actual penthouse suite where the newly reimagined series of Bergerac was filmed, indulge in a selection of exclusive Bergerac-inspired cocktails, and visit key locations from both the classic and new series.

→ *From £358 for two nights, dinner, bed and breakfast; stbreladesbayhotel.com*

9

BEST FOR GROWING YOUR OWN

Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Oxfordshire

It's not just exquisite food that's on the menu at Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons; this bucolic country house hotel in Oxfordshire is also home to world-class gardens and The Raymond Blanc Gardening School. Guided by the values of provenance and sustainability, the school's interactive tuition takes guests through Le Manoir's 11 stunning gardens and vast orchards, where they can discover the tranquillity of the Japanese tea garden or explore the 'Mushroom Valley' project, all whilst garnering skills and inspiration for their own green space, vegetable plot or allotment. To complete this immersive horticultural experience, a delicious working lunch is served in one of the elegant greenhouses.

→ *From £1,700 including luxurious accommodation, breakfast and dinner for two, plus one place on a day course; belmond.com*

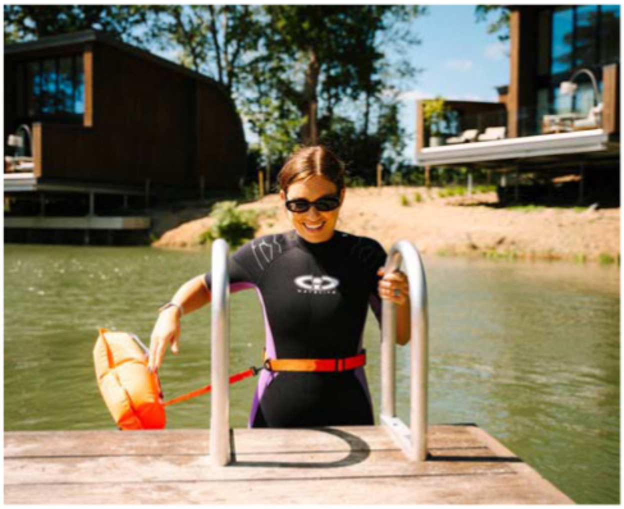
10

BEST FOR TAKING THE PLUNGE

South Lodge, Sussex

Luxurious Sussex spa hotel South Lodge is hosting several specialised wild swimming weekends. This one-night escape is for swimmers of all levels who are ready to transition from indoor pools to natural waters. The experience includes a full day's expert coaching from The Dip Advisor, Ella Foote; use of dry robes, wetsuits, tow floats and swimming hats; a light lunch in Botanica, the hotel's Mediterranean-inspired restaurant; overnight accommodation with breakfast, and access to South Lodge's award-winning spa until 2pm on Sunday. Elevate your stay by booking a night in The Reeds – a series of seriously chic new lakeside lodges that come equipped with outdoor baths, steam showers, private saunas and serene nature views.

→ *29 March, 19 July and 20 Sept 2025, from £645 per room for one, £785 for two; exclusive.co.uk/south-lodge* ◆



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CARAMEL
PEDLARS' GUIDE TO
THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Best of the rest…

• BEST FOR…WHISKY FANS

Dun Aluinn, an exclusive-use retreat in the Scottish Highlands, has launched the 'Ultimate Scottish Whisky Experience' in collaboration with whisky experts, MacLean and Bruce. This luxurious three-night break allows enthusiasts to delve deep into the world of Scottish whisky and includes privileged access to world-famous distilleries.

→ *Prices on application, dunaluinn.com*

• BEST FOR… CATCHING A WAVE

Chic self-catering hideaway Atlanta Trevone is hosting a surf retreat in partnership with surf retreat experts, Marnie Rays. Enjoy picturesque scenery, mindful activities and delicious local suppers in nearby Padstow, all whilst learning to surf.

→ *26-29 Sept 2025, three-nights from £1,000pp (based on two people sharing). atlantatrevonebay.com*

• BEST FOR…NOSTALGIA

Discover the best of Norfolk by heritage rail and paddle boat on this four-night tour which also includes a visit to Sandringham with acclaimed historian, author and TV presenter Lucy Worsley. All aboard!

→ *5 days from £995, 21-25 April & 19-23 May 2025, tripsmiths.com/collection/lucy-worsley*

• BEST FOR…OFF GRID ADVENTURES

The Glen Dye estate in Scotland is a whopping 15,000 acres of wilderness dotted with cosy cabins, cottages, and a brilliant Discovery and Adventure Centre. Here, guests can learn essential wilderness skills including fire-lighting and shelter building.

→ *Taster sessions from £25 per adult, £15 per child, plus accommodation. glendyecabinsandcottages.com*

• BEST FOR… WATER CONFIDENCE

Improve your technique and become a stronger, faster and more confident swimmer on Watergate Bay Hotel's two-day swim break, led by expert swim coach, Salim Ahmed. Dive into three tailored pool sessions, stretch out with a swim yoga session and hit the Cornish coast for a sea dip.

→ *£275pp, plus accommodation. watergatebay.co.uk*

• BEST FOR…ARTISTIC FLAIR

Newlyn School of Art offers some of the best short courses in the UK, taught by some of the most exciting artists working in Cornwall. Its four-day painting holiday on Tresco, the second-biggest island of the Isles of Scilly, includes tuition, five nights' dinner, B&B at The New Inn, spa access, entrance to Tresco Abbey Garden, a boat trip and more.

→ *£1,619pp, newlynartschool.co.uk*

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF *Jane Austen*

On the 250th anniversary of the author's birth, Jane Knight ties up her bonnet strings and checks into one of the author's homes in Bath, explores another in Chawton, and pays her respects in Winchester

Text by Jane Knight

I'm sitting on the sofa swooning over Mr Darcy, aka Colin Firth in the BBC adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Viewing the arrogant aristocrat turned tame hero's scathing glances, wet clinging shirt and eventual passion for Elizabeth Bennet makes the perfect end to a day exploring beautiful Bath. This spa city where Georgian society came to mingle was the author's home for six years. It also forms the elegant backdrop to parts of two of her six great novels – *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*.

My visit is particularly special, and not just because it falls in a celebratory year, marking 250 years since Jane's birth on 16 December, 1775. It's because I'm staying at 4 Sydney Place, where Jane lived with her parents and older sister, Cassandra, from 1801 to 1804 after her father retired as rector of Steventon, Hampshire. She also probably started her novel *The Watsons* here too; it was left unfinished when her father died unexpectedly in 1805.

OK, I don't get to sleep in Jane's bedroom – the five-storey house has been converted into flats and the upper ones are private, albeit with enticing names on their doorbells, including Cassandra's first-floor apartment and Mr Darcy's second-floor apartment.

Instead, I'm in the basement and former kitchen, where Jane would have made tea for the family. It's been converted into an extremely comfortable Airbnb rental, with a modern galley kitchen, a spacious master room with wooden bed and a compact single room with a futon. The former kitchen is now a large sitting room with original flagstone floors, a desk in what was the chimney recess should the muse strike you, plus an inviting sofa where I'm sitting before the 55-inch TV, gorging on the DVD library of Austen adaptations.

It's only two minutes across the road to Sydney Gardens and the Holburne Museum (the Sydney Hotel in Jane's time), whose columned façade doubled as Lady Danbury's House in the screen version of Bridgerton. Although the garden maze that Jane loved no longer exists, the park still makes a pleasant place for a stroll, with the Kennet and Avon canal flowing through.

From the flat, I make forays into the city, following in the footsteps of both Jane and her novels' protagonists. It doesn't take me long to discover why Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* exclaimed 'Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?'. The architecture alone is cause for amazement as you promenade along Great Pulteney Street (Bath's widest) and follow the glorious curves of the Royal Crescent and The Circus. From here, I head back down the hill along The Gravel Walk, where Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth finally got together in *Persuasion*.

Although the Assembly Rooms, where high society came to dance, are closed for renovation, you can still visit the Pump Room next to the old Roman baths (also well worth a tour). This is where fashionable folk would gossip beneath the chandeliers as well as 'taking the waters' from the same fish-themed drinking fountain that's there today. I take a few tentative sips of the mineral-rich waters but infinitely prefer the champagne served with yummy cakes and scones, accompanied by softly playing music.

Afternoon tea, this time with Mr Darcy (or at least his picture) is also on offer at the Jane Austen Centre at No 40 Gay Street, where you can gen up on the novelist in the fascinating museum. It's just steps from No 25 up the street, where Jane, her mother and sister rented rooms after Revd Austen died. Unlike my abode, though, this house isn't open to overnight guests or indeed visitors, unless they have a toothache – a plaque outside the door simply reads 'CJ Rushforth, JA Thompson, dental surgeons'.

Onward to Chawton

It's at her home at Chawton in Hampshire that you can really get under Jane's skin. She moved to the quaint village in 1809 with her mother, sister and family friend Martha Lloyd after spending three years in Southampton, where many former Austen haunts were destroyed by wartime bombing. The modest red-brick house, on one of the estates her brother

> *'I channel my inner Jane on the sitting room sofa, flicking through a copy of Pride and Prejudice where she first read the novel aloud to her friend, Miss Benn, whose cottage you can see in the village.'*

Edward inherited from distant relatives, has been carefully restored to resemble what it would have looked like at the time. I'm amazed at the diminutive 12-sided walnut table where she perfected earlier drafts of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey* as well as writing *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion* from scratch.

Exploring the cottage, I can't help being reminded of its similarity to Barton House in *Sense and Sensibility*, so it's no surprise to learn that it was the blueprint for the Dashwoods' home. I channel my inner Jane on the sitting room sofa, flicking through a copy of *Pride and Prejudice* where she first read the novel aloud to her friend, Miss Benn, whose cottage you can see in the village.

From my perch I can see chairs (originally from the Steventon rectory where the author spent the first 25 years of her life, and which no longer exists), her father's mahogany bureau, hand-copied piano music (she played piano every morning before breakfast) and scraps of original wallpaper.

But it's upstairs in the room thought to have been her bedroom that I feel the author's spirit the most. With its creaking wood floor, replica tent bed, small fireplace and cupboard holding a chamber pot, the room is highly evocative.

After a turn in the garden and a gawp at the donkey cart Jane used when she went shopping, it's a short stroll through the village that feels little changed since the Austen ladies' days to Chawton House, her brother Edward's home. The place Jane referred to as the Great House, and where you can easily imagine the novelist sitting in the reading nook off the ladies' withdrawing room, now holds 16,000 manuscripts by pre 20th-century female authors (anyone for Essay on Old Maids or Companion in A Tour Round Northampton?). Outside the small church in the grounds lie the lichen-covered gravestones of Jane's mother and sister.

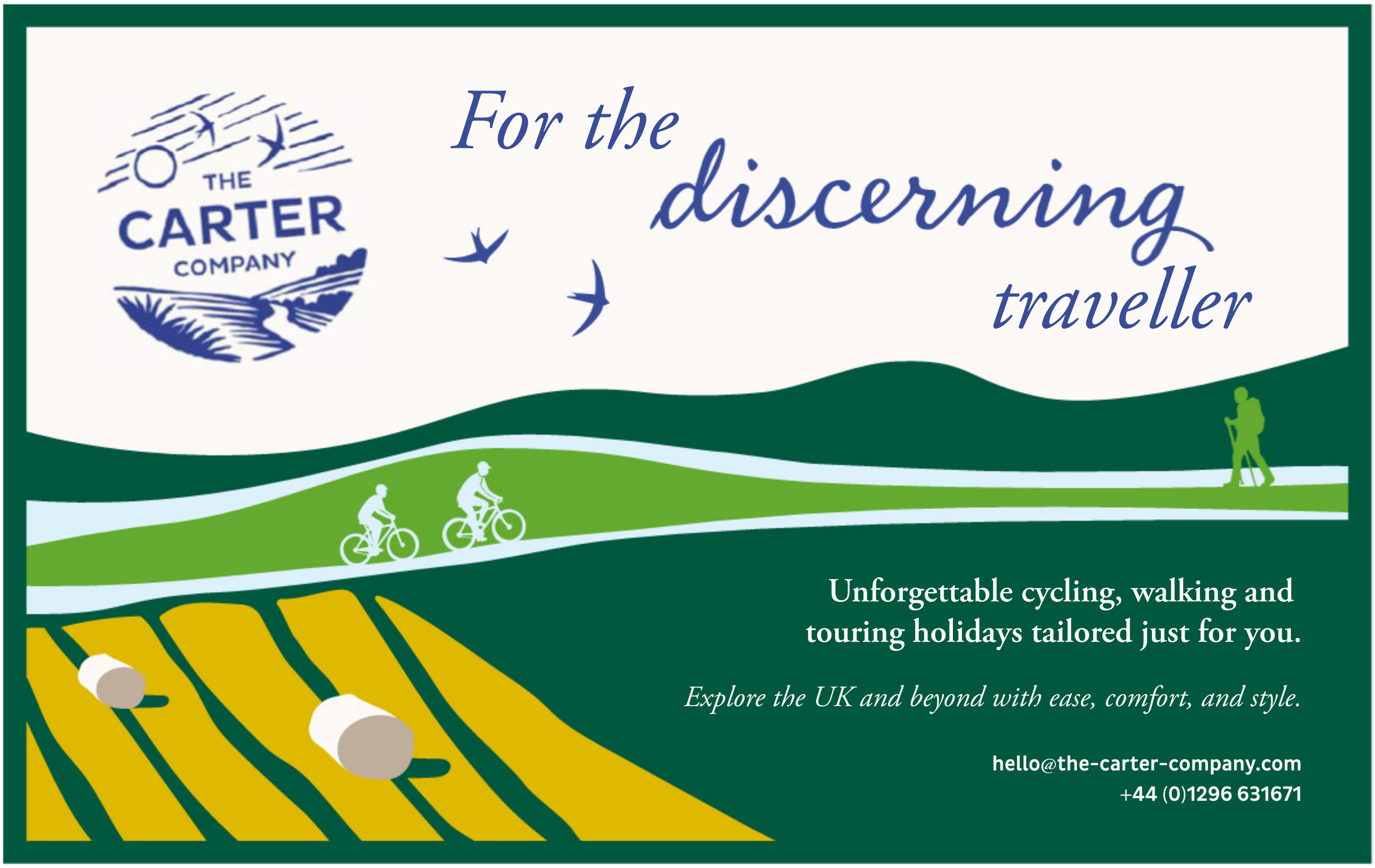
The final resting place in Winchester

Jane's own tomb is in Winchester, so it's to the ancient capital of England and seat of King Alfred the Great that I head next. Struck down in 1816 with a mysterious illness that may have been Addison's disease or Hodgkin's lymphoma, the author carried on writing the opening chapters of her unfinished novel, *Sanditon*, (which she named *The Brothers*) at Chawton.

However, by May 1817, her disease had progressed so much that she moved with Cassandra to be near her doctor at the County Hospital in Winchester, taking lodgings at 8 College Street by Winchester College, where eight of her nephews went to school.

It's on this pretty film set of a street that I stand gazing at the small mustard-coloured house, which opens to the public in the summer. 'Our lodgings are very comfortable. We have a neat little drawing room with a bow window overlooking Dr Gabell's [the headmaster's] garden,' wrote Jane. Just weeks later, she died, aged 41.

Walking along the same route followed by the small funeral procession of four male members of her family while Cassandra watched tearfully from the window, I pass the



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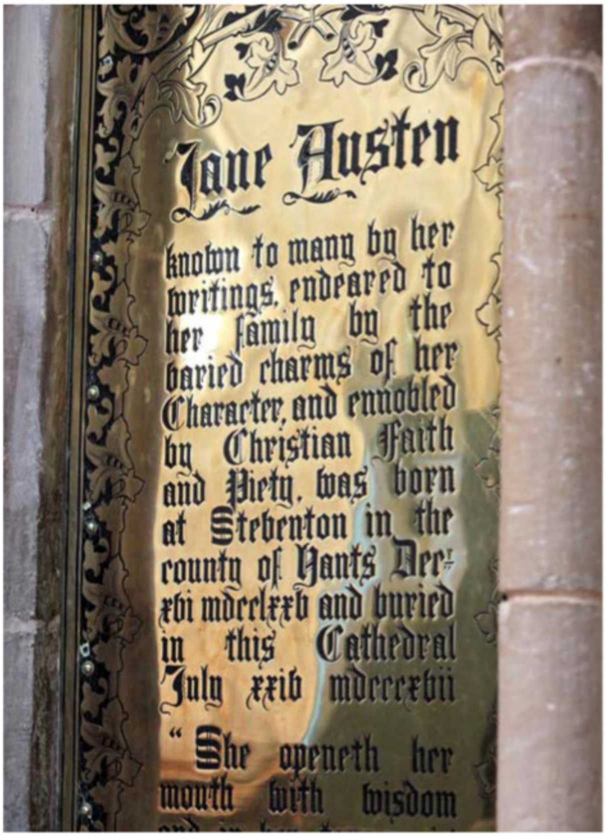

Jane Austen
known to many by her writings, endeared to her family by the varied charms of her Character, and ennobled by Christian Faith and Piety, was born at Steventon in the county of Hants Dec. xvi mdcclxxv and buried in this Cathedral July xxiv mdcccxvii
"She openeth her mouth with wisdom

'There's time to reflect on this mystery and to wonder why Cassandra destroyed so many of her letters after her death as I amble around the ruined flint walls of Wolvesey castle'

bookshop where Revd Austen held an account. Then it's onwards to the small Church of St Swithun-upon-Kingsgate above the medieval city gate, before arriving at the historic cathedral close with its half-timbered Cheyney Court and brick Deanery.

Jane was buried inside the cathedral's impressive perpendicular gothic nave. Her family's pain is almost tangible as you read that they 'know their loss to be irreparable' on the inscription. No mention is made of her prowess as a novelist as she wrote incognito – *Sense and Sensibility,* her first published novel, was attributed to 'a lady'. It's only after her death that Jane's works were published in her name; a brass wall plaque added later by her biographer nephew Edward refers to 'Jane Austen, known to many by her writings'. No one knows for sure how she came to be buried within the cathedral. Perhaps her two clergymen brothers put pressure on the dean, citing the fact that the Regent had asked her to dedicate *Emma* to him. Perhaps they were helped by Jane's friend, (the sister of the man she was engaged to for just one night), who lived at No 11 in the cathedral close.

There's time to reflect on this mystery and to wonder why Cassandra destroyed so many of her letters after her death as I amble around the ruined flint walls of Wolvesey Castle, which Jane mentioned in her poem *When Winchester Races*. She dictated it to her sister just days before she died, when she was too weak to write. It was one last contribution to the outstanding legacy of literary fiction she left behind, which gave us inimical characters such as the Bennet sisters, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and of course, Mr Darcy.

→ In Bath, 4 Sydney Place costs from £398 for two nights' self catering (airbnb.com). The Anchor Inn in Lower Froyle, ten minutes from Chawton, has charismatic rooms from £90, with breakfast (butcombe.com). In Winchester, The Old Vine opposite the cathedral has doubles from £190, with breakfast (oldvinewinchester.com). More information: visitbath.co.uk, visit-hampshire.co.uk, visitwinchester.co.uk

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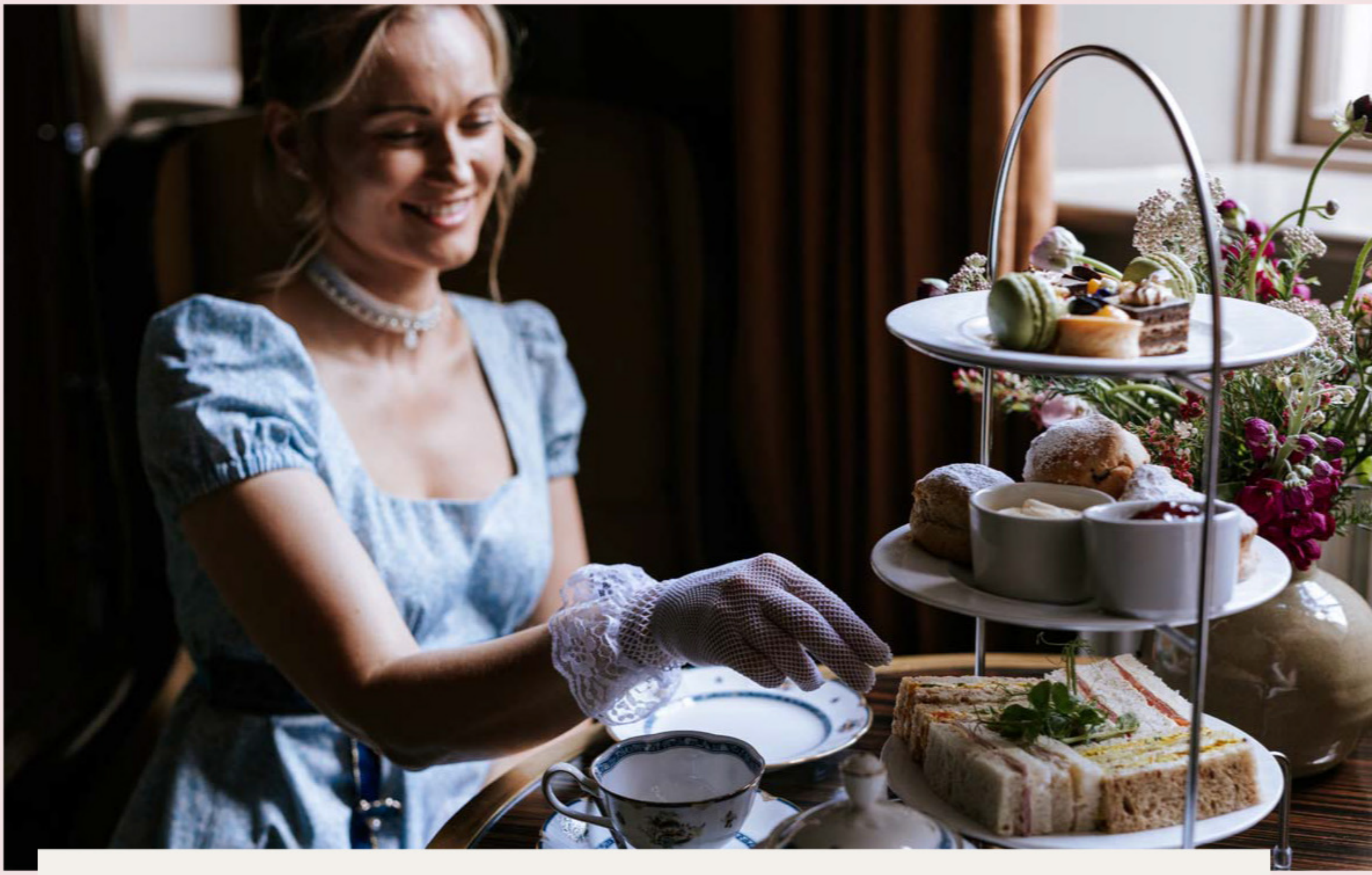
WHERE TO *stay*

Indulge in the charm and elegance of Austen's era by staying in the magnificent hotels of the towns and cities she loved



Best for Georgian Grandeur

The Gainsborough Hotel, Bath

Fit for a heroine of one of Jane Austen's esteemed novels anytime of the year, The Gainsborough's five-night Jane Austen Celebrations & Merriment is a party Jane Austen aficionados do not want to miss. Held over six days are a series of talks from esteemed professors and writers, guided tours of Regency Bath with Strictly Jane Austen, entry to No.1 Royal Crescent Museum, visits to Steventon and Lacock, guided countryside walking tours, a Regency dance workshop, an embroidery workshop, high tea, a celebratory dinner dinner, and several glasses of fizz with the opportunity to raise a glass to love, friendship and the enduring allure of Jane Austen's timeless stories!

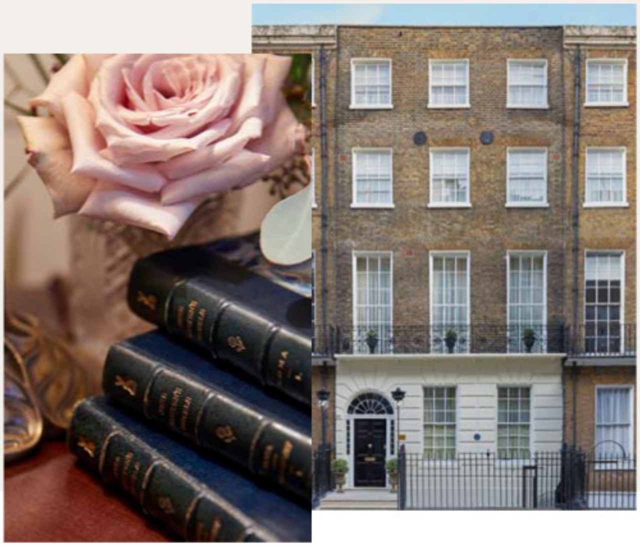
→ *13–18 October, five nights including breakfast and a full itinerary programme from £2,200 per person; thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk*

Best for Literary Luxury

Henry's Townhouse, London

Jane's favourite brother, Henry, owned 24 Upper Berkeley Street in Marylebone, which is now run as the six-bedroom Henry's Townhouse. This beautifully restored Austen-esque abode peruses an exquisite collection of first editions of Jane Austen's works, and unwind in elegantly appointed rooms named after Jane's family members. Experience the warmth of a home where every detail reflects a love for Austen's legacy and the connections that inspired her stories.

→ *Two-night Austen stays on set dates in June and September cost from £975pp and include talks from novelists, a half-day London tour, a three-course dinner and tea at the Drury Lane Theatre; henrystownhouse.co.uk*

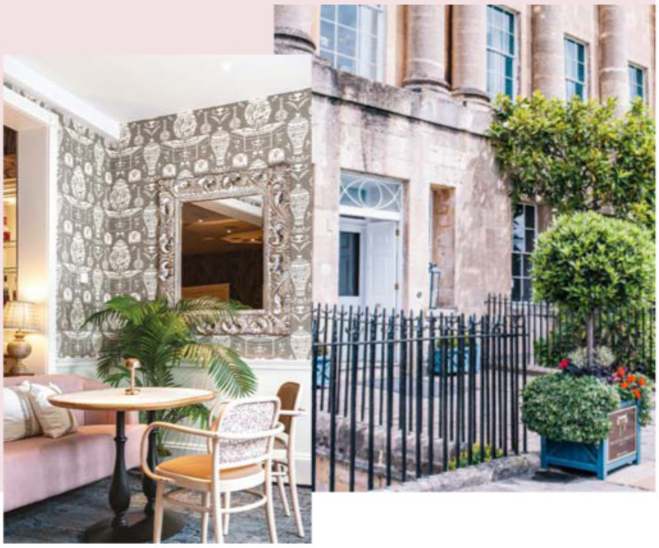


Best for Regency Romance

The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa, Bath

Many of the bedrooms in the Royal Crescent Hotel, located in the middle of the sweeping crescent-shaped row of Georgian townhouses, feature original architecture and stunning views of the crescent lawn – epitomising the elegance of the era when Jane Austen lived in Bath. Their Jane Austen anniversary package includes a luxurious overnight stay with breakfast, a captivating private walking tour, and a Jane Austen-themed afternoon tea in Montagu's Mews, bringing the flavours of Regency England to life.

→ *Jane Austen anniversary package from £660 for a double room including breakfast; royalcrescent.co.uk*



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Celebrating

A VERY SPECIAL MILESTONE: 250 YEARS SINCE JANE'S BIRTH

Follow in Jane's footsteps and visit some of the many special locations that inspired the author's work on a whimsical journey of the Great West Way®

Text by Jessica Way

If Jane Austen were alive today, she would be the ideal Ambassador for the Great West Way® – England's enchanting 125-mile touring route between London and Bristol. As one of the most renowned and quintessentially English novelists, Jane Austen's captivating stories can be explored, enjoyed and experienced firsthand along the Great West Way.

With Jane's connections to Bath, Winchester, Chawton and Reading, it is no surprise that her novels have been inspired by the quaint towns, villages and picturesque countryside of the Great West Way – and this is the reason behind the widespread celebration of 2025's momentous milestone 250 years since her birth.

The Great West Way invites you to experience the singular charm of everyday life as it unfolded in Jane's time. Yet, wait! There's another celebration in England this year; 2025 also marks 200 years since the modern railway was born, not more than a decade after Jane Austen passed away at her lodgings in Winchester. So, what better way to journey through this significant anniversary than by rail?

With a Great West Way Discoverer Pass (available at GWR.com, prices from £30.50), you can explore the enchanting world of Jane Austen and her timeless narratives at some of the most captivating locations that inspired her writing.

Experience the elegance of Georgian afternoon teas and delightful Jane Austen tours in the picturesque Hampshire countryside, where you'll walk in Jane's footsteps, immerse yourself in her inspirations and enjoy a touch of luxury. Speaking of luxury, Exclusive Collection's Jane Austen Escape package allows you to stay at both The Manor House near Bath and Lainston House near Winchester – where it feels as if you've stepped right into the pages of one of Jane's novels!

The two-hotel escape includes tickets to Winchester Cathedral and the Jane Austen Centre in Bath. With Jane Austen themed afternoon teas and cosy reading spots, prepare to dust off your bonnet and fall in love with the landscapes that inspired one of England's greatest authors. ◆

→ Exclusive Collection's Jane Austen Escape: Two Nights, Two Historic Gems with breakfast and attraction tickets is available for two-night stays between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025. Prices from £620, exclusive.co.uk. To find out more about Great West Way's Jane Austen 250 events and travel by rail with a Great West Way GWR Discoverer Pass, visit greatwestway.co.uk

Scan here to discover more Jane Austen events

JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE
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Exhibitions and Festivals

VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES SHINE A LIGHT ON THEIR BEST JANE AUSTEN CONNECTIONS

Winchester and Chawton

The cathedral city and idyllic village where Jane Austen lived from 1809 to 1817, wrote all her novels and passed away at the age of 41 will be showing artefacts that have never been on public display before – and opening Jane Austen's final home, No. 8 College Street, where she lived in the weeks before she died. (Tours will be guided on Wednesdays and Saturdays between the 4 June-30 August 2025. Tickets, from £12.50, must be pre-booked in advance). More of Jane's personal possessions and items can be discovered next door at Winchester College's museum, Treasury, from May 2025 until the end of the year.

Jane Austen's House in Chawton, a short drive out of Winchester city centre, where she crafted and revised all her beloved novels, is another must-see. There's a new permanent exhibition, *Jane Austen and the Art of Writing,* celebrating her as a ground-breaking and ambitious writer and covers all aspects of Jane Austen's creative process, from her early teenage writings to her mature published novels. At the centre of the exhibition is a full set of first editions of Jane Austen's novels, which are very rarely seen together. (Admission is complimentary with a ticket to Jane Austen's House).

Back in Winchester, a short walk from College Street, the City Museum will be exhibiting more of

Jane Austen's personal possessions including Jane's pelisse coat, donated by a descendant of Jane Austen (on display on selected dates between 22 May-17 August 2025).

Located just a stone's throw away, Winchester Cathedral where Austen is buried is honouring the author by displaying the original manuscript of a poem written by Jane, which has never been on public display before. The poem, *To the Memory of Mrs Lefroy*, was written by Jane in 1808 on the anniversary of her friend Anne Lefroy's death.

You can don your finest attire for an evening celebrating the customs and traditions of the Regency and late Georgian periods at the Regency Ball at Winchester Cathedral (31 May 2025, tickets must be pre-booked in advance). You might prefer to sit back and relax while others take care of the details and enjoy the Regency Fashion Show at The Great Hall, where an array of iconic fashions from the Regency era will grace the runway in their best attire (26 July 2025, VIP tickets are available, pre-booking is advised). For a live, beautifully illustrated talk with an acclaimed historian discussing the world of Jane Austen and her timeless classics such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion, An Audience with Lucy Worsley on Jane Austen* is on at The Great Hall, 5 September 2025. (Tickets are priced from £39, historicwinchester.co.uk).

For those who want to literally follow in Jane's footsteps, there are a number of guided talks, walks and routes highlighting key locations and landmarks associated with Jane's life. *The Jane Austen Trail of Winchester* explores the city as Jane knew it (there's also a self-guided version highlighting key landmarks). From Jane Austen's House in Chawton, *Jane Austen Circular Walk* helps you to retrace the route she would have taken to the village of Farringdon. Or, for a longer excursion, the *Jane Austen Trail* winds from the market town of Alton to Chawton, where Jane and her sister Cassandra often shopped together – passing the 'Great House,' as Jane referred to it in her letters, where her brother Edward lived.

Alton and Steventon

Jane Austen celebrations will be staged during the annual *Jane Austen Regency Week* – a 10-day festival with walks, dancing, tours and talks (also in Chawton and Selborne). There's a Regency Dancing Workshop (afternoon of 21 June) and the Alton Regency Summer Ball at the Alton Assembly Rooms (evening of 21 June).

The village of Steventon, Jane Austen's birthplace and home for the first 26 years of her life, will host *Jane Austen's Country Fair* (6 July 2025) at Pump Field, the very site of the rectory where she was born. The last time such a fair took place was in 1975 for Jane's 200th anniversary. Adding to the commemoration, a beautiful Regency-style garden will be created in the town as a lasting tribute to her (tickets must be pre-booked in advance.)

Southampton

While Austen's links with Bath and Hampshire are well documented, less well-known are her ties with Southampton, a short detour off the Great West Way. She went to boarding school in Southampton with her sister Cassandra and, as well as visiting several times over the intervening years, she also lived in the shadow of the Gothic Southampton Castle between 1806 and 1809. She celebrated her 18th birthday at a ball dancing in the upstairs rooms of The Dolphin and resided in Castle Square with her brother Frank and his family. The Austen family attended All Saints Church and frequented plays at The French Street Theatre.

Southampton was clearly an influence on Jane's writing. On one visit in its heyday as a watering place and spa, Jane stayed with her cousin Elizabeth and visited Netley Abbey, a Gothic ruin. On returning home she wrote *Susan*, an early version of *Northanger Abbey,* published after her death, which she sent to a publisher for an advance of £10. Visit God's House Tower in Southampton's Old Town, close to where Jane Austen lived, and discover items loaned by descendants of Austen's circle of friends now on show at Southampton's SeaCity Museum exhibition, *A Very Respectable Company – Jane Austen and Her Southampton*

IMAGE © BJANKA KADIC / ADOBE STOCK (NETLEY ABBEY)

Circle until 31 October 2025. This exhibition has been inspired by the *Persuasion* quote: "My idea of good company, Mr Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company".

Pride and Prejudice (*sort of)* is showing at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton, 10-14 June 2025. The award-winning comedy is an irreverent but affectionate adaptation of the matchmaking saga, Jane Austen's most iconic love story.

There's also a free, downloadable Jane Austen Heritage Walking Trail Map specially created for 2025 that pinpoints eight key locations explaining Austen's Southampton story.

Reading

Jane Austen's time in Reading, though brief, left an indelible mark. She attended the Reading Ladies Boarding School, then housed in the Abbey Gateway, from 1785-1786. This period of her life is believed to have inspired settings in some of her novels, most notably *Emma*. Reading Museum will host a series of talks, tours and workshops celebrating Jane Austen and her time in Reading (Wednesdays throughout May and June 2025). As part of Reading Museum's Abbey Quarter tours are new guided visits to Jane Austen's school room – the very spot where Jane is thought to have based Mr. Goddard's school in *Emma* (Saturdays from April to October 2025), and visitors can also explore the Abbey Gateway and Reading Abbey Quarter.

The National Trust's Basildon Park, located just outside Reading, served as Netherfield, Mr. Bingley's grand home in the 2005 film *Pride & Prejudice*. This 18th-century mansion has been featured in numerous period dramas too.

The Mill at Sonning Theatre will present the world premiere of *Death Comes to Pemberley* (1 May-28 June 2025). This theatrical adaptation, based on P.D. James's novel, imagines a chilling mystery at Pemberley, the idyllic estate of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Wiltshire

Parade House is an impressive Grade I listed Georgian townhouse built in 1720 where Jane Austen is said to have stopped off when on her way from Hampshire to Bath. As part of the *Jane Austen Festival* (12-21 September 2025), their Regency-costumed '*Ladies & Gentlemen on Parade*' event will be filmed by the BBC. Throughout the year, you can visit for house tours, fine-dining and Regency Cream Teas in The Ballroom, watch performances by The Jane Austen Dancers of Bath, enjoy Jane Austen-themed screenings in the luxury cinema housed within the historic vaults, and National Trust's Heritage Open Days.

At nearby Bowood, Dr. Lizzie Rogers, a women's history specialist with a passion for Jane Austen, will present a 75-minute talk, *Jane Austen in the Georgian Period*, offering insights into the lives of young women in Georgian society (20-21 September 2025). This connects to Jane Austen's own life, as she was once a tenant of the 2nd Marquess of Lansdowne, who owned Bowood House.

Bath

Bath, a city both loved and ridiculed by Jane Austen, hosts the annual Jane Austen Festival and a Grand Regency Promenade (13 September 2025). Visit No. 1 Royal Crescent for *The Most Tiresome Place in the World: Jane Austen & Bath* (5 July-2 November 2025) and enjoy Regency treats at Sally Lunn's, Roseate Villa and the Pump Room Restaurant – all places Jane Austen herself would have frequented. Visit Bath's free audio tour covers Austen's city life, or for a curated experience, In and Beyond Bath offers a day tour. The Sydney Gardens *Jane Austen Trail* explores Austen's relationship with these pleasure gardens, and the *Hop on with Jane Austen* bus and walking Tootbus tour offers unlimited hop-on hop-off access across two bus routes, exploring iconic landmarks like the Royal Crescent and Roman Baths at your leisure. This open-top bus tour brings to life the locations that inspired Jane Austen's timeless novels with audio guides and breathtaking views of Georgian architecture, paired with the captivating *Pride & Promenade Tootwalk*. ◆

The SKYE'S the limit

British Travel Journal heads to Scotland's second biggest tourist pull, the Isle of Skye, to meet the young artisan producers who are at the forefront of championing and preserving the island's natural larder

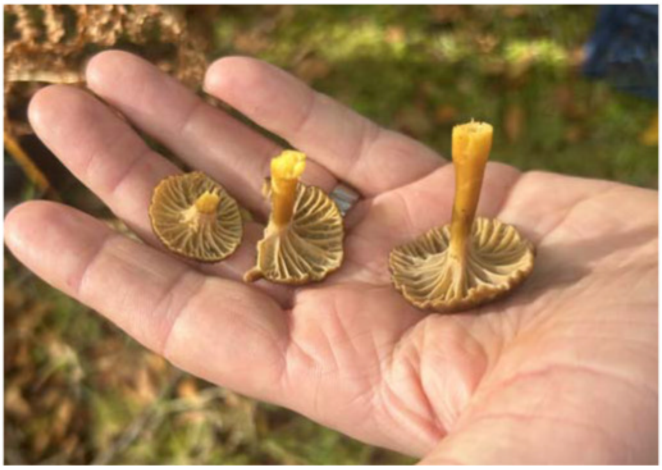
Text by Emma Henderson

"Look for sunlight on the mossy areas, that's where mushrooms are most likely to grow," Calum Montgomery, chef proprietor at Edinbane Lodge and a keen forager, tells me.

I'm carefully treading through the woodlands of Dunvegan Castle Gardens on the north west of the Isle of Skye. Underfoot is undulating spongy moss, while I also hear the familiar crunch of brown leaves as they're just starting to fall to the woodland floor. The early October sun is streaming through the forest's tree canopy and we're enjoying some of the best weather the island has had all year, Calum says. There's an earthy damp scent in the air and our small group are all bent double, eyes glued to the forest floor, scanning for the right type of mushrooms – winter chanterelles and hedgehog mushrooms. We've seen red spotted toadstools and plenty of other inedibles including the terrifyingly nicknamed 'heartstopper', which are all swiftly avoided.

Striking gold, Calum's crouching down on one knee by a mossy hollow in the bottom of a tree – he's found some chanterelles. Turning them upside down, he says the gills underneath the mushrooms' cap mean they're safe to eat. He harvests sustainably by cutting the stem and only taking a few of the cluster so spores are released and they'll regrow. They're best collected in a wicker basket or a box with holes in it, so as you walk, spores are spread over the woodland too.

Calum's one of the many sgiathanachs (Gaelic for people from Skye) who are preserving the culinary heritage, skills and knowledge of local fishers, crofters, foragers and



distillers, while also adding their own touch to it, and I'm here to meet them and see how they're changing the island.

A born and bred islander, he cut his teeth in restaurants in Glasgow and went on to win three AA Rosettes at Ullinish Lodge (now closed) aged just 26. He then became the head chef at Kinloch Lodge on the south side of the island until 2017. That's when he and his dad, Neil, saw a 16th century hunting lodge and land for sale, and decided this was the right project for them.

Following an extensive renovation, Edinbane Lodge is now a restaurant with six rooms and land used to grow and forage ingredients. "I think we are in an incredible position with the restaurant in Skye and the outstanding produce on our doorstep, which I personally feel is unrivalled," Calum explains. Showing us just how close he means, he takes us foraging right from the lodge where we pick bittercress (a peppery flavour like wasabi) and purslane leaves that taste similar to watercress. Within minutes, he dives off into the thicket, retrieving a handful of meadowsweet stems for us to taste (a little like hay) which will be in tonight's dinner (in the white chocolate, meadowsweet and blueberry dessert) on his impressive ten-course 'A Taste of Skye' menu.

Though hard to pick a favourite course, the single scallop dish is ingrained in my mind. Forget any miniscule molluscs here, it's one of the biggest, tastiest and creamiest I've ever had, owing to the skilled hand-scallop diver James Cameron, owner of Skye Scallop Divers. While showing us some of his diving spots from his boat the following day, James explains

> “*Though hard to pick a favourite course, the single scallop dish is ingrained in my mind. Forget any miniscule molluscs here, it’s one of the biggest, tastiest and creamiest I’ve ever had…*

CAFÉ CÙIL
ISLE OF SKYE

the importance of sustainably catching scallops and how Skye is home to some of the UK’s best seafood thanks to its very clean waters, lack of predators and strict sizing rules that allows them to grow to bigger sizes.

Calum grew up in Portree, the island’s main town, so setting up his own business on Skye was important to him not only to be able to use the produce, but also to provide jobs for people to come back to. “A lot of young Skye folk move away right after leaving school to chase the bright lights of the city and experience something different to island life,” he says. “Many return within five to 15 years so they can apply their craft and bring something back to the community. I think it’s really special. I love the city, but the lure of home has always been strong and as my family is rooted in Skye, it was always going to be the perfect place for my wife and I to bring up our own family.”

Another who moved back home after a stint elsewhere is Clare Coghill, owner of Café Cùil – meaning nook, nest or corner in Gaelic. It’s not always been here in the foothills of the Cuillins range, not far from Skye’s famed Fairy Pools – Claire first opened Café Cùi some 600 miles away, in East London’s Dalston, just five weeks before the pandemic. With such unfortunate timing, Clare went home to Skye for what she thought would be a few weeks, but after realising it would be much longer, she shut up shop in the capital. She says she didn’t have “much time to think about whether it was the right decision or not. We knew we wanted to be closer to nature and quieter spaces and once we got home to Skye, we knew we were in the right place.”

Skye has always been a creative place for foodies and chefs inspired by the landscape, but for Clare, she thinks “lockdown made Skye a more desirable place to live – it

Breakfast Pot £6.50
hazelnut, chia seeds, coconut yoghurt

brought myself and other younger people home and made us realise there's no better place to start a business, surrounded by a supportive community of people we grew up with."

In Skye, she works inline with seasonal Hebridean produce, foraging wild food and even hand-diving scallops herself. Café Cùil champions casual dining, and when I visit it's busy – almost every table in the large space is occupied, with more queuing for tables or takeaway. I first ordered the signature in-house made Cùil-Aid, a mulled apple cider (it changes seasonally). I had it served warm and it felt just like autumn in a cup. Other must-order dishes include the local beef brisket rarebit with Orkney cheddar topped with a poached egg, as well as the orangey-hued Skye chanterelles on toast, which we obviously order after our time foraging.

Not only advocating the island's food, Clare's also helping to keep Scottish Gaelic alive, as each table has a notecard with some useful phrases. Clare's spoken it since she was five years old and though more people are speaking it in the highlands and islands, she's keen to encourage visitors to learn some phrases and further preserve it.

Café Cùil is just one of a handful of cafes that have sprung up in the past few years. Another is Lean To Coffee, which should be anyone's first stop on Skye, especially if you've driven a few hours west from Inverness airport like I did, as it's less than ten minutes from the Skye Bridge.

Opening in 2021, it's part converted shipping container and part ruined croft, with empty window frames and no roof bar a perspex section. Heaters keep people cosy, and inside is mismatched furniture and bunches of dried blooms hanging from the eaves, softening the ruins. The container has a till and counter filled with baked goods, boho-style lampshades and Monstera plants, all pointing to how owners Seren and Lorenz have brought a touch of Antipodean cafe culture to the Highlands, after Lorenz grew up in Australia.

Famous for its toasties, I order 'the full hat' made with wild venison and pickles, which oozes with gooey cheddar cheese. The baked goods sell out quickly, like the cinnamon buns and the Basque cheesecake, and here the coffee comes from coffee specialist Birch, just 45 minutes up the road in Portree.

Owned by Niall Munro, he opened Birch's first outpost in 2020, which was followed by another in Inverness last year. He was also inspired by his time living in the coffee-capital of Melbourne. His beans are traceable back to the grower and are roasted in small batches, which since 2021 he's been able to do onsite at his small roastery on Skye. When I visit the roastery, which is essentially a stripped back version of the main cafe, I see the roast happening about 20 feet behind the counter. I also try some of the baked goods including indulgent salted chocolate tart, chunky almond croissants and sticky flapjacks, which are often even baked by Niall's mum.

After fuelling up at Birch, it was time to get on the water, as no visit to Skye is complete without a boat trip and eating approximately your bodyweight in langoustines. The best way to do this? A day-trip on the Seaflower boat, owned by Ewen Grant and Janice Cooney, and crewed by Matilda Painter-Jones and Kyle Meland. It goes to Rassay, famed for its distillery, but we're off to the nearby privately-owned island of Rona, which has just two inhabitants.

Following an energetic walk across the mountainous Rona, which is just 9.3 square kilometres, we're back on the boat about to dive into a seafood platter feast of langoustines, hot smoked and smoked salmon (all caught this morning by Ewen's brother, so it's mega fresh) with lashings of bread and butter. But first, Matilda shows us how to get the most meat out of a langoustine – first, pull off the head. "Everything in the head is fair game", she says as it's often thought to be the best bit, but instead Matilda says "keep the claws, as some of the best meat is in here."

Next, crack the body section in the middle on either side to pull off the shell in two parts. Back to the claws, and after a few carefully considered cracks and twists here and there, like a magician, Matilda produces a fully in-tact piece of meat from the claw shell, nicknamed a langoustine lollipop. Sadly, I never quite master that skill, but have de-shelling the rest down to a fine tee after such a hefty pile.

With the sun still beaming down through a pristine blue sky, I have a glass of chilled white wine in hand and a belly full of seafood straight from the waters we're bobbing on – it's hard to think how the day could get better. Yet, on the way back to Portree from Rona, a group of playful dolphins dash, dive and dance around the boat, and then, in the distance, a minke whale bursts through the glass-like water, slapping its tail on the surface as it dives back down to the depths. Even the crew are near speechless, just like the rest of us.

Back on shore, it's clear Skye's traditional skills, knowledge and even language are in safe hands with this generation who are beyond proud to show off the island's bountiful larder, from foraged mushrooms to hand-dive scallops and everything inbetween.

It feels like what they're doing is just the tip of the iceberg of what's to come – the sky really is the limit for this little but mighty island. ◆

→ *Rooms at Edinbane Lodge start from £199 in low season and £299 in high season and the Taste of Skye menu is £150; edinbanelodge.com*

IMAGES © LYNNE KENNEDY PHOTOGRAPHY / ANGUS BLACKBURN (CAFE CUIL)

FEELING *on-point in* POLZEATH

British Travel Journal heads to North Cornwall's area of outstanding natural beauty, staying in an exquisite holiday home in Rock with all the amenities of the Point at Polzeath and the many surrounding golden beaches on the doorstep

Text by Jessica Way

Situated in one of the country's most sought-after waterfront locations, Rock – a charming scenic location for exploring Rock, Polzeath and Daymer Bay – is a picturesque village nestled along the banks of North Cornwall's Camel Estuary, opposite Padstow.

For a home-from-home in the heart of the village, 11 Slipway is an immaculate four bedroom, four storey townhouse, perched gracefully above the estuary with views of Britain's Saint-Tropez. The property features a reverse-level, sun-soaked open-plan kitchen and living area, a cosy log burner and corner sofas, while folding glass doors seamlessly connect the interior to the outdoor terrace, embodying the true essence of coastal living with a minimalist touch. Throughout the space are delightful nods to artisan Cornwall, from hand-crafted Kernow soap bars to sumptuous woollen Atlantic blankets. It's easy to make yourselves at home with a cup of Tregothnan tea and a Furniss clotted cream biscuit while enjoying the peaceful sounds of this picturesque coastline.

Available through The Point Holidays, guests of this stunning holiday cottage can enjoy the perfect blend of

private luxury accommodation in Rock and access to the The Point, just a short drive away in Polzeath. The resort has a vibrant community of on-site residents, with a restaurant, leisure facilities, golf, swimming pool, tennis courts and hub of activities.

Rock is famed for its sandy beaches and excellent sailing conditions – a popular spot for water sports including windsurfing, kite surfing and sailing. The village itself has a quaint and relaxed atmosphere, characterised by its picturesque setting, traditional Cornish architecture and friendly local community.

From the doorstep of 11 Slipway is the South West Coast Path – you can follow the acorns from the village to Daymer Bay, or venture further into Polzeath. The views are breathtaking, with uninterrupted scenic beauty of the shimmering Atlantic Ocean and the stunning Stepper Point – a little further around the coast is The Rumps, a fantastic rock formation. The climb is rewarded with spectacular views back towards Polzeath and the Camel Estuary. If you're lucky, you might spot seals and dolphins gracefully swimming in the waters below.

For those who enjoy a longer hike, from here it is approximately ten miles to Port Isaac, the historic fishing village now more famous for being the film location for *Doc Martin*, the television series with Martin Clunes.

In addition to the outstanding scenery and magnificent views, the local area has emerged as a gastro-tourism hotspot, with Nathan Outlaw's two-star Michelin restaurant just a ten-minute drive, and Rick Stein's celebrated seafood restaurants of Padstow a short ferry ride across the river. However, you don't need to travel far to experience culinary delights of this calibre; exceptional dining options are available right at your doorstep.

11 Slipway offers an incredible advantage for food lovers, sitting just moments away from Paul Ainsworth's renowned restaurant The Mariners, where you can enjoy a 'Dogs Pollock' hot dog, a sparkling Camel Valley, or standout seafood burger – a favourite of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay (who owns a holiday home in Rock).

The pub is renowned for its outstanding food and extraordinarily special dining experience, from grilled hand-dived Orkney scallops and fried Porthilly Oysters to timeless classics including fish and chips, a ploughman's, shepherd's pie and Scotch eggs. The straightforward dishes truly shine here due to the meticulous care and thoughtfulness that goes into crafting each and every meal.

The Mariners' Croque Madame, featuring Tamworth ham, Cornish rarebit, tomato and nigella seed relish alongside a perfectly fried St. Ewe hen's egg, is a delightful reminder that salads can be anything but boring! The dining experience is nothing short of exquisite, and has a wine list to match. There's also a great selection of cocktails, beers,

IMAGES © IAN WOOLCOCK / HELEN HOTSON (STOCK.ADOBE.COM)

> *The views are breathtaking, with uninterrupted scenic beauty of the shimmering Atlantic Ocean and the stunning Stepper Point.*

TUCKERS
Beachside Takeaway Cafe
FOUR BOYS
TUCKERS
FOUR BOYS
COFFEE

ciders and spirits – including Tarquin's Cornish and Paul Ainsworths very own "daring" gin.

Plus, there's exciting news for Rock – Paul Ainsworth, who also owns the Michelin-starred Paul Ainsworth at No6 and Padstow Townhouse, has taken over the ownership of the St Enodoc Hotel, a 21-bedroom hotel and restaurant within easy walking distance of The Mariners.

You could spend weeks in Rock and never run out of places for a delicious breakfast, lunch, hot chocolates, ice-creams or dinner. Four Boys is a local favourite, serving fresh pasta and grilled fish – open for breakfasts throughout the summer. For bistro-style food and fine Cornish Beers on tap there's The Upper Deck. Alongside fashion and homeware, you can smell the fresh Cornico coffee in The Beach House, and for pasties, sandwiches, cakes and delicious warm Belgian waffles, there's Tucker's.

Just a little further up the hill you will find Fee's, another restaurant certainly worth the trip – especially for a delicious Philip Warren bacon muffin or some freshly prepared lunch meats and salads from the deli. If you're unfamiliar with Philip Warren, be prepared to see his name pop up frequently during your stay in Rock, Polzeath and Daymer Bay. Since opening its doors in 1980, this traditional butcher and farm shop has gained immense popularity and respect among the local community.

From Rock, it's a short drive to The Point at Polzeath, where there is plenty of available parking for guests. The crowning achievement is the recent launch of Koto at The Point, a small retreat of 17 beautifully designed eco-cabins – and the rest of the on-site accommodation isn't half bad either. There are many beautifully appointed dog-friendly holiday cottages, luxury apartments overlooking the golf course and seriously stylish sustainably-crafted Scandinavian designed hideaways.

From playing a game of Padel tennis to feasting on a delicious crab sandwich on the terraces overlooking the golf course, there are countless ways to enjoy your time here. It is just a 15-minute stroll down to Polzeath beach (often referred to as Hayle Bay), made famous after Prince William chose the location for a surfing stag do, and Prince Harry for a romantic weekend with Meghan Markle.

This surfing mecca, with its stunning sandy beach and gentle waves, has a new attraction in town – a wild spa oasis decorated with festoon lights, botanicals, fire pits, hammocks and more.

Polzeath's Wild Spa is a private outdoor space to rest and recharge, launched by the trio behind Saunas By The Sea (the hand-built woodfired saunas you've probably seen on the Cornish beaches of Pentireglaze Haven and Harlyn Bay). The exclusive wellness garden is hidden behind a wooden shop front, selling stylish jumpers, books and more. Head through the back of the hut and you uncover a new world, complete with a sauna, outdoor immersion tub, therapy rooms, workout space, and an under-canvas workshop studio for yoga, pilates and sound bath classes.

Founders Steve, Henry and Luke are passionate about fitness and wellness and how hot and cold therapy can help

BAMBOO
BLISS

with recovery and emotional wellbeing. Interchanging from the sauna's heat to the cold water plunge tank, you can feel the benefits firsthand – and on New Polzeath beach, you can experience the invigorating sauna-to-the-sea experience.

At low tide, you can walk across from Polzeath to New Polzeath and Pentireglaze (also accessible by footpath from the South West Coast Path). Nicknamed 'Baby Bay' by the locals, Pentireglaze was home to the first Saunas By The Sea concept and is a beautifully remote beach for some time away from the crowds and a more leisurely swim (without the surfers).

The Point Restaurant and Bear Bar is the perfect place to spend a magical evening, bathed in the stunning golden glow of the setting sun. From scrumptious scallops to perfectly cooked pork belly – made with locally sourced, seasonal produce – the food is exceptional. When the sun dips below the horizon, the entire vista is transformed into a breathtaking masterpiece, with the golf course, Polzeath and the boundless sea and view of Puffin Island on the distant horizon. ◆

→ Jessica Way was a guest of The Point Holidays staying in luxurious coastal retreat in Rock, 11 Slipway. 7 nights from £940. The Point Holidays accommodation can be booked for stays of two nights or more, starting from £440, thepointholidays.co.uk

You might also enjoy...

- Taking the short ferry ride over to Padstow and hiring bikes to explore the picturesque Camel Trail, a scenic route perfect for leisurely rides along the riverbanks, surrounded by breathtaking natural landscapes.

- Discovering the literary legacy of the poet Sir John Betjeman, who famously adored this area. He spent his later life in a charming house overlooking the dunes and is buried at the serene St Enodoc Church, a stunning site steeped in history and beauty.

- Book a surf lesson with Surf's Up! Surf School in Polzeath, where experienced instructors cater to all abilities, allowing you to catch some waves in the vibrant surf culture of the area. Alternatively, in Rock you can book water activities with Camel Ski School, including water skiing, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), wakeboarding and more.

- Golf enthusiasts should revel in the 18-hole golf course at The Point, with views over Hayle Bay and Pentire Point – and the renowned St Enodoc Golf Club in Rock. These challenging courses both boast stunning coastal views and lush landscapes, making them a must-visit destination for golfers of all skill levels.

BOATING *through* BRITAIN

Holiday hire boats on the canals used to be basic: polyester sheets, hard mattresses, tiny beds, no cafetière. Now, a new generation of vessels with every home comfort is drawing a more discerning crowd to the inland waterways

Text by Paul Miles

Britain has over 2,000 miles of navigable rivers and canals, many of them connected so that you could – if you had time at three miles-per-hour – voyage from the edge of the Lake District to within 30 miles of the English Channel or from Lincoln to Llangollen. Thousands of people live on narrowboats full-time, and some document their adventures on social media. For a taster of this life in the watery slow lane, there are some beautiful boats available to hire. The men and women of centuries past who carried cargoes of coal and pottery, their wooden crafts hauled by horses, would be amazed…

Boutique Narrowboats, Leicestershire

BEST FOR BOHO CHIC

The new hire company, Boutique Narrowboats, has boats with wooden worktops, Belfast sinks, rainfall showers and cottage-style interior doors. This Bohemian rustic look is the perfect complement to the overgrown – or shall we say shabby chic – Market Harborough arm of the Grand Union canal Leicester line, where reeds and overhanging trees abound. Foxton Locks, two or three hours' cruise away, is a popular tourist attraction. Lock-keepers will help you up and down the two impressive staircases, lifting you 75ft above the Leicestershire plain. Instead, cruise onwards towards Leicester on a delightful twisty rural stretch, or simply mosey back and forth along the Market Harborough arm. The fabulous Shambala festival is held nearby each summer. A few days on one of these lovely boats could be your chill-out after a weekend of zany musical fun.

→ *boutiquenarrowboats.co.uk*

Beacon Park Boats, Brecon Beacons

BEST FOR ROMANCE

Arguably at the top of the league in the world of luxury canal boating, the 20 vessels of Beacon Park Boats' fleet are all unique, each one crafted with attention to detail using the finest quality materials and, sometimes, such as in the case of two-berth Wren, in partnership with a designer of luxury super yachts. So, whether you fancy a romantic floating home with a hot tub on the bow and a four-poster bed or a boat for eight with all mod-cons and complimentary Welsh whisky, this is the company to choose. The 'Mon & Brec' canal offers easy, slow cruising through hilly scenery of the Brecon Beacons National Park (Bannau Brycheiniog). The locks on this canal are nine feet wide, so some vessels in the fleet are wider than your average narrowboat. Each boat has bow-thrusters to aid manoeuvrability.

→ *beaconparkboats.com*

> “
>
> *Whether you fancy a romantic floating home with a hot tub on the bow or a four-poster bed with all mod-cons and complimentary Welsh whisky, this is the company to choose.*

European Waterways, Highlands, Scotland

BEST FOR DEEP POCKETS

Inland waterways cruising takes on a new dimension in Scotland. The 60-mile long Caledonian canal joins three lochs together in a route of jaw-dropping Highlands scenery (and the chance to spot Nessie). Most of the mileage is through wide lochs, including Loch Ness, which can get choppy at times. Arguably the best and safest way to enjoy the cruise is to sit back and let an expert captain take the helm. You need deep pockets to enjoy the leather Chesterfield sofas and tartan rugs that is Scottish Highlander, 117ft-long and sleeping eight in four cabins. With all meals and drinks provided, you may need to swim and hike to work off calories. The boat's 'Scottish country house' decor might not appeal to all but the scenery and attentive service from the crew of four will wow everyone. Wealthy grandparents could splash the cash and charter this – and/or sister ship, Spirit of Scotland – for the family holiday of a lifetime?

→ *europeanwaterways.com*

Duck Island Boats, Lancashire

BEST FOR LOCK-FREE CRUISING

If you don't like the idea of working a boat through locks, the Lancaster Canal offers 41 miles of lock-free cruising – the longest stretch in the country. This waterway hugs the coast and, from the village of Hest Bank, you can even glimpse the sea of Morecambe Bay. This is a perfect boating holiday with a canine companion (two of the boats accept small/medium dogs.) As well as walks on towpath and bay, the Lake District, the Arnside & Silverdale AONB and the Forest of Bowland are all nearby – as are scenic train rides on the Settle to Carlisle line, heading off from Carnforth station where the classic *Brief Encounter* was filmed. The four boats of this company have 'hotel quality' bedding and king-size beds.

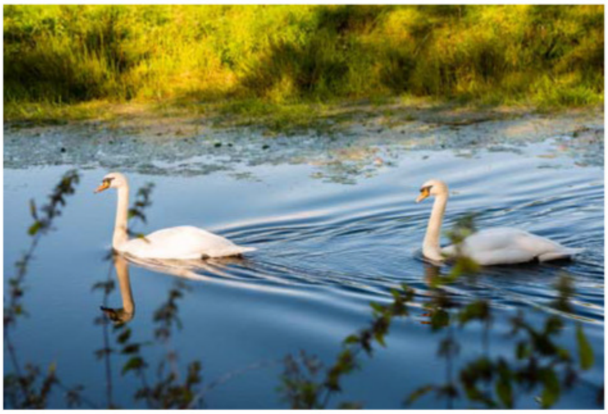
→ *lancastercanalboathire.com*

Cafwin Cruises, Worcestershire

BEST FOR GOING GREENER

Cafwin Cruises is a young family-run company with just two boats – one of which is hybrid-electric (and the other shortly to be converted) so that you can cruise silently, powered by the sun (if it shines). There are comforts unheard of on most hire boats: robes, slippers, Egyptian cotton bedding, pillow menus, oak floorboards and double-glazing. Based in Droitwich on one of the most recently reopened canals, you can choose between there-and-back or circular routes taking in market towns, rural and city canals, plenty of locks and the beautiful River Severn. Full instruction on how to steer and operate locks is provided, as is the case with all these hire firms.

→ *cafwincruises.com*



Aqua Narrowboats, Staffordshire

BEST FOR A TUNNEL ADVENTURE

The five hire boats of Aqua Narrowboats have pale, unfussy, modern interiors with king-size beds across the width of the boat and granite worktops in the kitchen. The boats are dog-friendly and have the eminently sensible 'reverse layout' design, which means you step down from the tiller into the kitchen (or galley, if you want to be nautical). The company is based on the Trent & Mersey canal in the very plush Barton Turns marina, where you have free parking for two cars. From here, you have the option of many circular or there-and-back routes exploring countryside and cities, such as the potteries of Stoke-on-Trent and the chance to cruise through Harecastle tunnel – at one-and-a-half miles, it's the second-longest on the system and takes 40 minutes to travel through.

→ *aquanarrowboats.co.uk*

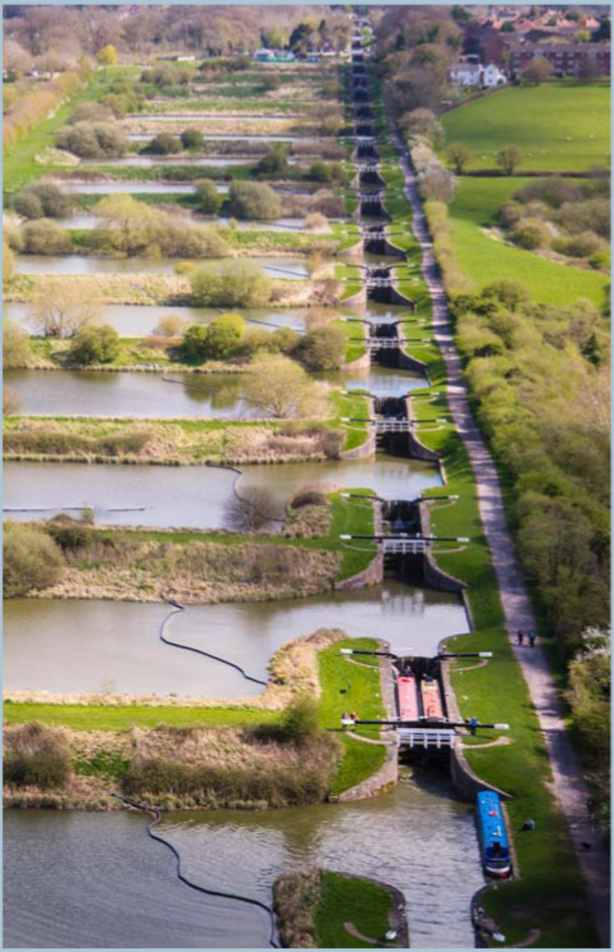
Black Prince, Falkirk, Scotland

BEST FOR MODERN ENGINEERING

Mainstream holiday hire boat company Black Prince has narrowboats at bases all around the UK. Their new 'signature range' is a cut above their classic fleet. With muted colours, more worktop space, extra USB ports and sleek wooden furniture, the interiors are more Scandi-chic than their caravan-like classic cousins stuck in the 1980s. In Scotland, you could travel on the world's only rotating boat lift, the Falkirk Wheel, which opened in 2002. It raises boats from the Forth and Clyde Canal to the Union Canal, 115ft above. A passage through this engineering marvel is a highlight on a cruise over aqueducts and through quiet countryside for 31 miles to Edinburgh, where you can moor in Lochrin Basin, surrounded by modern office and residential blocks and restaurants – just half an hour's walk from Edinburgh Castle.

→ *black-prince.com*

IMAGES © JANET DAVID RIDLEY (TWO SWANS) / JAKE SUGDEN (CRUISE ENGLAND) / TIM JONES / AS YOU SEE IT MEDIA



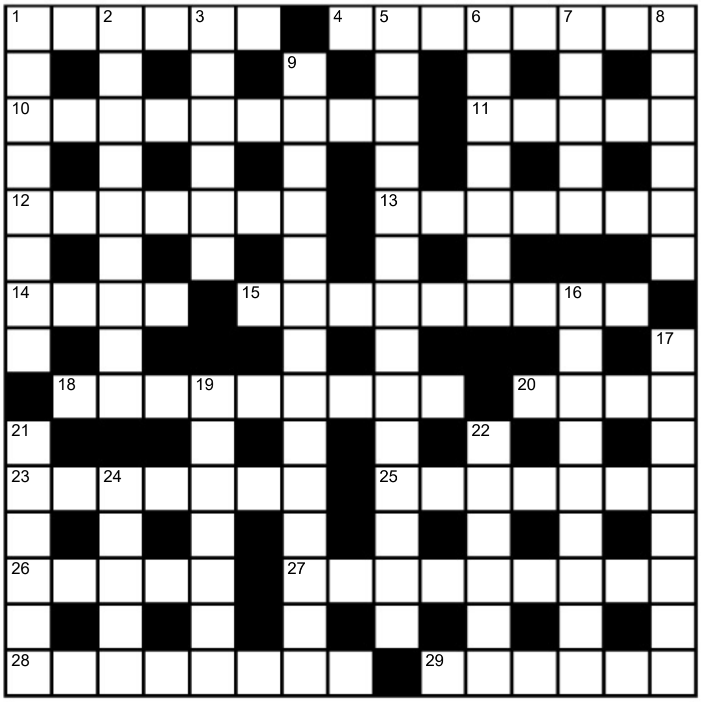
Cruise England, Wiltshire

BEST FOR THE LUXURY OF SPACE

While much of the canal network is only suitable for narrowboats seven feet wide, some locks, such as those on the Kennet and Avon canal in Wiltshire, are big enough for boats the size of caravans. These wide-beam boats are as spacious as a studio apartment. There's no need to walk sideways like a crab to squeeze past someone else. Cruise England is a new company that has taken over the wide-beam fleet once owned by Moonraker Canalboats. Each of the four vessels is ten feet wide – at this size, there is space for luxuries such as king-size beds, whirlpool baths and a dining table that can seat up to nine (although five will be sitting on folding chairs). The Kennet & Avon Canal has one of the most impressive flights of locks in the country: Caen Hill has 29 wide locks lowering the canal over 237ft in two miles.

→ *cruise-england.co.uk*

CROSSWORD COMPETITION



ACROSS

1 Low Tide Festival islands (6)
4 Where to find St. Michael's Resort (8)
10 Frying aid particularly common in the East (6,3)
11 Hiker's path (5)
12 One who attributes souls to objects and plants (7)
13 Fred ran off, finding somewhere to dine in Leith (7)
14 High-class Bruton eatery (4)
15 Ways to see almost any country (4,5)
18 According to regulations (2,3,4)
20 Green project in a Cornish pit (4)
23 Tropical breakfast fruit (7)
25 Devise (5,2)
26 One can get 100 kobo for it (5)
27 Got more intense (9)
28 Gives for safekeeping (8)
29 Seizes power by force (6)

DOWN

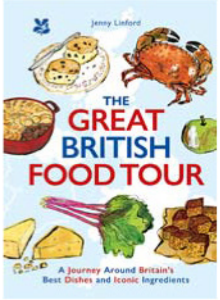
1 Some divas (8)
2 Ineptitude (9)
3 Bonnie Annie --- (6)
5 "Everybody help!" (3,5,2,4)
6 Performer with cape and sword (7)
7 Long-continued practice (5)
8 Sainted South Atlantic isle (6)
9 Wiltshire town made royal in 2011 (7,7)
16 Tom peered out, finding something which picks up the pace (9)
17 To the max (2,6)
19 Italian cocktail bar in Auld Reekie (3,4)
21 Gleneagles Townhouse restaurant (6)
22 Cheese purveyor North of the Border (6)
24 Start ---, on the Devon coast (5)

Clues & Reviews

Page-turners and crossword puzzle about some of the places *we love* the most and have featured in this edition!

Send a picture of your completed crossword, or email a list of the answers; crossword@britishtraveljournal.com

Be quick! The first five correct entries to be received win a delicious loose leaf black tea from Dorset Tea, inspired by Dorset's most stunning beaches.
→ dorsettea.co.uk


Jenny Linford
THE GREAT BRITISH FOOD TOUR
A Journey Around Britain's Best Dishes and Iconic Ingredients

The Great British Food Tour, Jenny Linford (National Trust Books, £14.99)
Do you know your Bedfordshire clanger from your Dorset knob? Your Kentish cobnuts from your Cromer crab? This guide is packed with stories about the familiar (and forgotten) food that makes Britain great.

THE TIMES
BRITAIN'S BEST WALKS
CHRISTOPHER SOMERVILLE

The Times Britain's Best Walks (second edition), Christopher Somerville (Times Books, £30)
As the Walking Correspondent at The Times, Christopher has covered the length and breadth of the UK on foot. Here, he selects his top 200 routes from Cornwall to Shetland.

WILD SWIMMING
SNORKELLING BRITAIN
100 MARINE ADVENTURES

Snorkelling Britain, Emma & Gordon Taylor (Wild Things, £18.99)
Written by SCUBA and snorkelling instructors, this water lover's guide unearths the best tidal pools, reefs, seagrass meadows and deep-water sites to explore in Britain. If you love wild swimming, this will help you add new depth to your dips.

Answers to the crossword in our Autumn/Winter 2024 Edition: Across: 1 Through traffic 10 Ukase 11 Beaumaris 12 Titania 13 Sinkers 14 Nouns 16 Triathlon 19 Conferred 20 Reach 22 Nasally 25 Guesser 27 Corinthia 28 Imply 29 Lowest of the low Down: 2 Heartburn 3 Odeon 4 Gibraltar 5 TEALS 6 Axminster 7 Farne 8 Casts on 9 Gunton 15 Swellings 17 Indignant 18 Leads up to 19 Cynical 21 Harlyn 23 Strew 24 Yahoo 26 Etive
Answers to the crossword in our Spring 2025 Edition (above) will be printed in the Summer 2025 Edition.

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